Graff

LITERARY NOTICES.

Among the Indians. By Henry A. Boller. Philadelphia: T. Elwood Zell. Mr. Boller has spent eight years in the Indian territory. He left St. Lonis in 1858, and was stationed at Fort Atkinson, in a region peculiarly exposed to trouble. While there he studied the habits and customs of the Indians whom he saw, Mandans, Sionx, Gros Ventres, Crows and others, and records their manner of living and the alternate trading and fighting to which they snbjected the whites. There is nothing romantic in the narrative. It is plainly a plain account of what was seen and experienced far up the Missonri, on the borders of Montana and Dakotah, and near to the British line. The description of war parties, feasts, medicines, dances, trade, religion and hunts are similiar to those which may be found in any work on Indian character. The writer does not believe in having many small forts, but a few good ones. He asserts that the Indian agents are ordinarily knaves, and thinks that the Indians may be improved, though their habits cannot be changed. He attribntes many of the wars and murders that have been recorded to laxity on the part of the government, which shonld promptly and equally punish the misconduct of the Indians and those who impose upon them. Finally, he thinks that they may be bronght to welcome a pastoral life, if the effort is rightly made, and points out the Ricarees, Gros Ventres and Mandans as the tribes to experiment with. Those portions of the volnme relating to personal adventure and Indian habits are well written, and contain much instruction.

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To
Cousin Jane
with Affectionate Regards of
The Author

Philad^{a} Oct. 31st 1867

AMONG THE INDIANS.

TO

JOHN JORDAN, Jr., Esq.

A Token

OF

RESPECT AND ESTEEM.


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T. Ellwood Zell, Publisher.

PHILADELPHIA.

1868

BRITISH POSSESSION

MONTANA

DAKOTA

MINNESOTA

IOWA

NEBRASKA

WYOMING

COLORADO

KANSAS

MISSOURI

IDAHO

UTAH

Scale of Miles

ROUTE OF UNION PACIFIC R.R.

UNION PACIFIC R.R. EASTERN DIVISION

MISSOURI RIVER

ROCKY MTS.

Missouri River

Yellow Stone River

Platte River

Republican River

Arkansas River

Big Horn River

Powder River

Green River

Bear River

Snake River

Grand R.

Cheyenne

Little Missouri R.

Big Sioux R.

Niobrara River

Loup Fork

Elkhorn R.

Blue Water Creek

Beaver Creek

White Earth River

Bear Mts.

Little Rocky Mts.

Crow Butte

Deer Lodge City

Helena

Virginia City

Bannack City

Gallatin City

Big Hole R.

Beaver Head R.

Three Forks

Three Tetons

Fort Hall

Fort Lemhi

Fort Limhi

Fort Bridger

Fort Supply

Fort Laramie

Fort Bernard

Fort Phil Kearny

Fort C.F. Smith

Fort Randall

Fort Kearney

Fort Hall Heurey

Fort Bridger

Fort Halleck

Fort Sedgwick

Fort Bascom

Fort Riley

Fort Leavenworth

Fort Ridgely

Fort Abercrombie

Fort Pembina

Fort Union

Fort Benton

Fort Rice

Fort Sully

Fort Randall

Fort Laramie

Fort Kearney



AMONG

THE INDIANS.

EIGHT YEARS IN THE FAR WEST:

1858—1866.

EMBRACING SKETCHES OF

MONTANA AND SALT LAKE.

BY

HENRY A. BOLLER.

PHILADELPHIA:
T. ELLWOOD ZELL.
1868.

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PREFACE.

THE following pages have been written from a journal and notes kept during my residence of eight years in the Far West. I have endeavored to narrate truthfully, and without exaggeration, only such incidents as fell under my personal observation, and also to portray faithfully Indian life in its home aspect.

At the present time, when the Indian is being held up before the world as an incarnate fiend, it is but fair that his redeeming qualities should likewise be recorded.

I shall ever look back upon the years spent in the Indian country as among the pleasantest of my life, and if in all my dealings with white men I had found the same sense of honor that characterized my "savage" friends, my appreciation of human nature would be much higher.

PHILADELPHIA, *July*, 1867.

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AMONG THE INDIANS.

CHAPTER I.

THE GREAT WEST — FUR TRADE — NAVIGATION OF THE MISSOURI — THE FIRST STEAMBOAT.

AT no period in its history has the Great West attracted such universal interest as the present. From the discovery of gold on the Pacific coast to the magnificent enterprises which are now being inaugurated, the changes have succeeded each other with wonderful rapidity. The daring of the Pioneers who first explored the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains, the toilsome emigration to Oregon and California, the constantly increasing commerce of the plains, the telegraph, the daily mail stage, and now, last and greatest, the Pacific Railroad;—all these changes in an ordinary lifetime!

Of the various great fur companies that formerly thrived and flourished, with their wild array of retainers, the Hudson's Bay alone remains, and is

every year becoming more and more circumscribed in its sphere of action. It is also the oldest, having been chartered in 1670 by Charles the Second, and granted almost unlimited powers. The Northwest Company, established in 1783, was for a time a most formidable rival. Next came the Mackinaw Company, who claimed the trade of the country watered by the Mississippi and its tributary streams; the Rocky Mountain Fur Company in 1808, with its headquarters at St. Louis; and the American Fur Company in 1809, under the auspices of John Jacob Astor.

Besides these, there were minor associations and numerous individual traders.

St. Louis, formerly a frontier village, inhabited principally by French Creoles, and a general rendezvous for traders and trappers, whence they started on their long and perilous journeys, is now the leading city in the Mississippi Valley. The Mackinaw boat has given place to the steamboat; the cordelle, or towing-line, has been superseded by the steam-engine.

There are yet voyageurs living who have been on the cordelle from Independence, Missouri, to Fort Benton, a distance of nearly three thousand miles. The most incessant and persevering toil was necessary to stem the turbulent current, and the hardy

voyageurs never hesitated for a moment to plunge into the water, reckless of heat or cold, when the shifting channel made it necessary to cross from point to point. In 1832 the American Fur Company ascended with a steamboat as high as Fort Union, six miles above the mouth of the Yellowstone. This was the second grand link in the chain of events. The cordelle was now reduced to seven hundred miles, that being the distance between Fort Union and the Blackfoot Post. For a number of years the Fur Company's steamboat regularly made its annual trip, and the subject of navigating the upper river was as often talked of.

In 1850 the *El Paso* ascended without difficulty as high as the "Round Butte," a distance of perhaps three hundred miles. In the summer of 1859 the Fur Company sent up, in addition to their annual steamer, a small stern-wheel boat, called the Chippewa, drawing very little water, expressly to make the attempt, which was entirely successful; and to Mr. Charles P. Chouteau, of the American Fur Company, and Captain John B. La Barge, of the Chippewa, belongs the credit of proving that the Missouri River was navigable by steam to within a few miles of the Great Falls.

The cordelle was a memory of the past; a new era in the history of the Great West had been in-

augurated, whose effects were not apparent, however, until several years later.

The American Fur Company (Upper Missouri Outfit) held their sway for many years. During most of the time they had more or less opposition, principally from traders who had been at some time or other in their employ. These traders were usually well sustained by the Indians, who fully appreciated the advantages to be gained from competition. In 1860 this competing interest was bought out by the American Fur Company, with the expectation of monopolizing the entire trade of the Missouri, as in the early days.

In 1866 they retired from the field they had so long occupied, and in which such striking changes were going on. Up to 1864 the Fur Company's steamers were the only ones that ascended the river. In that year Montana became the grand centre of attraction, and a number of steamboats went up, under individual auspices, loaded with passengers and freight. Each succeeding year this number increased, until, in 1867, over forty steamboats ascended the Missouri.

Military Posts have been established at various points on the river; the Indian tribes are in a state of anarchy, the quiet seclusion of the Indian country is forever destroyed, and the reign of the fur trader virtually at an end.

When the toils and sufferings of the pioneer explorers of the Missouri River and the trackless wilderness are compared with the steady progress of improvement, sometimes scarcely perceptible at first, but increasing with giant strides as the years roll round, who will not unhesitatingly admit that

"Westward the star of empire takes its way"?

CHAPTER II.

ST. LOUIS — SCENES AT STARTING — ARRIVAL AMONG THE SIOUX — COUNCIL — MORE INDIANS — FORT PIERRE — STOPPED BY YANCTOHWAHS — VILLAGE OF THE RICCAREES.

THE annual departure of the Fur Company's steamboat from St. Louis, with supplies for the various trading-posts on the Upper Missouri and its tributaries, was an event that formerly excited great interest. Crowds thronged the levee, watching the bustle to and fro, and the last hurried preparations for starting. Black volumes of smoke pour from the tall chimneys, the waste steam escapes with a hoarse roar, and a few preliminary turns of the wheels add to the fast increasing excitement. Curiosity-seekers crowd the cabin, peering into every nook and corner, as if they expected to discover some phantom of the wilderness, and listen eagerly to the conversation between the members of the Fur Company and their friends.

Here is the well-known Col. Robert Campbell, himself a "mountaineer" in the early days of the Fur Trade; and although he has not taken an

active part for many years, he still feels that interest in seeing the Expedition off, which is natural to any one who has shared in the perils and excitement of frontier life. The Colonel is talking to Indian Agent Vaughan and Malcolm Clark, the latter a veteran of over twenty years' experience, and thoroughly versed in all the wiles and mysteries of Indian trading. Clark wears a blue blanket capote, and displays a tobacco-sack of scarlet cloth beautifully garnished with beads, the handiwork of his Blackfoot wife.

At length the order is given in sharp, decided tones, to "clear the boat." The rush and confusion are at their height; farewells are heartily exchanged, and the deck-hands haul in the heavy stages. On the hurricane-deck the Captain is calling the roll of his voyageurs, who are singing, or rather shouting, their Canadian boat-songs with greater energy than music. Some few stragglers hurry aboard at the last moment, fearful of being left, carrying a "shooting-iron" in one hand, and a mysterious black bottle in the other. Much amusement is created among the voyageurs by the fruitless attempts of a couple of landlords to find delinquent boarders who have been snugly hid away by their comrades, and intend to remain so until under weigh, leaving their too confiding hosts to mourn over hopes departed.

The last hawser is at length cast loose, and the last plank drawn in, thereby compelling the luckless Bonifaces to leap ashore, up to their knees in water, to the delight and amusement of the lookers-on; and, after slowly swinging out into the stream, on the morning of May 23d, 1858, the good steamboat *Twilight*, Captain John Shaw, commenced her long mountain trip.

The voyage up the river was unmarked by any incident worthy of notice until we had passed beyond the confines of civilization and entered the borders of the Sioux country, more than twelve hundred miles above St. Louis. Here we met the first large body of Indians, a band of Yanktons, who were encamped, awaiting the arrival of their annuities, which were on board of the *Twilight*, in charge of the Agent, Col. Redfield.

This band of Yanktons had recently, through a delegation sent to Washington, sold a portion of their beautiful country, Dacotah, to the United States, reserving a tract on which Government bound itself to establish a farm and school for their benefit.

The white skin lodges scattered over the broad green prairie, the horses feeding in all directions, and the gay dresses of the Indians, on the river's bank, formed a wild and picturesque scene. As we

neared the camp, firing salutes meanwhile from the cannon on board, men, women, and children flocked down to the water's edge to witness the landing of the "Fire Canoe."

The squaws, however, generally remained in the background, although the young and pretty ones, with their cheeks tinged with vermilion, were, like their sisters of a lighter hue, by no means averse to displaying their charms, or displeased with the attention they excited. The old ones, on the contrary, their scant leathern dresses blackened and greasy with age and dirt, remained completely in the rear, scolding almost incessantly at the dogs and children.

None of the squaws with this band would have stood for types of that female beauty which has its existence only in the imagination of the novelist; some of the old ones, worn out by age and hard work, were surely fit living representations of Egyptian mummies. The boys and dogs ran about, and, like boys and dogs everywhere else, contrived to be constantly in the way. The urchins were mostly naked, or at best wore a breechcloth only, and carried small bows with blunt arrows. As soon as the landing was effected, Col. Redfield stepped ashore, when the chiefs and principal men hastened to grasp him by the hand, uttering the

universal salutation, "How!" The cabin having been previously arranged, by removing the tables and placing a semicircle of chairs, the chiefs were at once formally invited on board. The Council made slow progress, like most Indian "talks," during which the pipe was industriously circulated. The Agent, through his interpreter, addressed them at length, urging them to "love their enemies" and obey the wishes of their Great Father, the President; and this advice, though well meant, would doubtless be more honored in the breach than the observance. It was difficult to satisfy the Indians about their presents, and they would not consent to receive them until they had gone on shore and counted the bales and boxes. Then, finding that the number agreed with what their Agent had told them, they returned to continue the Council.

The cabin of the *Twilight* presented an unusual appearance. The group of Indians comprised the dignitaries of the band, dressed and painted after their own wild fashion. A handsome pipe of red stone, filled with "chash-hash-ash," or inner bark of the red willow, passed from one to another almost without interruption, and its fragrant odor pervaded the entire apartment. During the council, a few visitors were permitted to come on board; they peered into every nook and corner, and nothing

seemed to escape their prying glances. Those on shore indulged freely in remarks upon the deliberations of their chiefs; and among other pleasant suggestions, one fellow coolly proposed a general scalping of the whites! Although this humane project seemed to meet with universal favor, it was deemed inexpedient for the present. At the close of the council the Agent presented the two principal chiefs with large silver medals, bearing the likeness of their Great Father, President Buchanan, saying, as he did so, "This is made of the real stuff," which information was doubtless highly gratifying to two such profound judges of the purity of metals in general, and silver in particular, as "He-who-strikes-the-Rees" and the "Little Crow." Afterwards he presented the head chief (Strike-the-Rees) with a spy-glass of inferior quality, and a box of India-rubber balls; the latter "for his boys," said the Agent, bouncing one. The expression on the Indian's countenance, when he received these munificent gifts, was one of mingled amusement and contempt.

The Council concluded with a feast, consisting of "black medicine" (coffee) and hard bread. The decks were then cleared, and the expedition once more proceeded on its way.

The next excitement was caused, a few days later,

by a party of twenty-five or thirty mounted Sioux, on the Dacotah side, who ordered us to stop and land. Their commands not being complied with, they began firing, but without effect, as the distance was too great. Another party now showed themselves on the Nebraska side, and as the boat kept steadily on her way, they too fired, but with like result. Our Dacotah friends, finding their efforts to stop us unavailing, rode furiously off, with gleaming weapons and fluttering pennons, forming a striking picture as their outlines became sharply defined against the clear, blue sky, while cresting the hills in their wild gallop.

A few miles farther on, where the channel ran close in shore, a crackling of branches was heard, and the Indians appeared on the bank, demanding a talk with the Agent. Making a merit of necessity, the boat landed, and Col. Redfield, with Zephyr his interpreter, went ashore. The Indians seemed greatly excited by their chase after the boat, and Medicine Cow, the chief, gave the Agent the comforting assurance that he would get —— (as the interpreter expressed it) at Fort Pierre, where several thousands of the different bands of the great Sioux nation were encamped, impatiently awaiting their annuities. After a present of tobacco and provisions, the boat was permitted to move on.

The Indians in this party were splendid-looking men, well armed and equipped.

It was at the close of a beautiful day in June when we laid up in sight of Fort Pierre, the first trading-post on the river. All that night our ears were greeted with the unaccustomed sound of the wolves howling in every direction. Fort Pierre was one of the largest posts in the Indian country, and some years ago was the centre of a flourishing trade with the Sioux, which has since greatly fallen off, many of them trading on the Platte and at the posts on the upper Missouri with the Rees and Gros Ventres, having patched up a very convenient treaty with their old enemies. The Indians here assembled belonged principally to the Minnecongew, Two Kettle, and Yanc-toh-wah bands of the Sioux. Hundreds of lodges were pitched in the vicinity of the fort, and bands of horses were feeding over the prairie.

Some of the squaws, especially those belonging to the Two Kettle band, were quite prepossessing in their appearance. One in particular excited universal admiration: she wore a dress made from the skin of the big-horn, tanned soft and white, and lavishly embroidered with beads, and managed the spirited American horse upon which she was mounted with a dashing grace worthy of a Di Vernon.

The presents for each band were placed in separate piles; and immediately upon the termination of the council, most of the Indians hurried off to their respective camps, whence they quickly returned, leading horses harnessed to travées, and upon these primitive vehicles the goods were speedily dragged away to be distributed by the chiefs at their leisure. These travées are of the simplest possible construction, being merely two poles tied together at one end and fastened to the pack-saddle, the remaining ends being left to trail on either side. A couple of stretchers are lashed behind the horse at suitable distances, to which is secured a network of raw hide, and it is then ready for use. A horse will draw from two hundred and fifty to three hundred pounds weight upon one of them, and the lodge, household utensils, dried meat, children, and puppies are usually transported in this way. Smaller ones are made for the benefit of the dogs, who are thus unwillingly compelled to make themselves useful.

After leaving Fort Pierre no incident occurred worthy of notice until the afternoon of the fourth day, when several horsemen appeared on a high bluff, close under which the boat would have to pass. Warrior after warrior came dashing up at full speed, until fifteen or twenty dark forms stood out against the sky.

Preparations were made to land, seeing which, the Indians turned their ponies loose, and remained quiet and impassive. This was a portion of Big Head's band of Yanc-toh-wahs; the camp itself was out of sight beyond a distant range of hills. A long, dark line of warriors, riding abreast, emerged from an intervening roll of the prairie, and with full pomp and panoply advanced to meet us, headed by the famous chieftain Big Head in person. All were dressed in shirts of deerskin, profusely decorated with scalp-locks, stained horsehair, and devices worked in porcupine-quills and beads. War eagle-feathers were fastened in their hair, and pennons of scarlet cloth fluttered from the lances. They were armed *cap-à-pie* with shields, bows and arrows, and firearms, while the tomahawk and scalping-knife were indispensable accompaniments. Some wore necklaces formed of the claws of the grizzly bear, highly prized as trophies and ornaments. Onward they came, firing their guns into the air, with whoops and yells, and finally halted about fifty yards from where the Agent and his interpreter stood. Then dismounting, they seated themselves in a line, holding their horses behind them by their lariats. Big Head and his principal chiefs advancing, shook hands haughtily with the Agent, and conducted themselves in an insolent and overbearing manner.

In reply to the question, why they had fired off their guns as they approached, the chief said that when they met *friends* on the prairie they met them with *empty* guns. As they had carefully reloaded, the only inference to be drawn from this remark was, that they considered us in the light of possible foes. We all breathed more freely when the good *Twilight* was once more breasting the swift current of the Missouri, and we had left Big Head and his grim warriors far in our rear.

None of the old mountaineers went ashore on this occasion, but had their rifles ready for instant use, well knowing the treacherous nature of this band. Malcolm Clark remarked to me that we were very fortunate in getting off without a difficulty, as they were evidently ripe for mischief.

Early in the morning of the 19th of June we arrived at the village of the Riccarees. Unlike the Sioux, who are always roaming, the Rees have a permanent settlement, which they occupy during the spring and summer, moving away in the fall to some well timbered point where there are good indications of game and abundance of grass for their horses. Here, securely sheltered from the fierce wintry winds, they devote themselves to the chase, dressing furs, and drying meat to serve them when hunting becomes dangerous and difficult from the

breaking up of the rivers and the forays of their enemies. They cultivate large fields of corn, and also pumpkins and squashes, which agreeably vary their diet of buffalo-meat. These summer lodges are large and covered with dirt, forming a great contrast to the white conical ones of the Sioux.

Both the trading-posts presented rather a dilapidated appearance, owing to the great scarcity of timber and the danger of sending their men to secure a supply from a distance. Fort Clark, (so named after the renowned explorer of the Missouri,) the post of the American Fur Company, was built on the lower side of the village; and about three hundred yards from it, Fort Primeau, the post of the Opposition Company. This fort took its name from Mr. Charles Primeau, one of the oldest and best of the mountain traders. Both the forts, as well as the village itself, were completely infested with rats, to the discomfort and annoyance of all the inhabitants, both white and red. These pests had been an importation from one of the Company's steamboats years before, and had multiplied to such an alarming extent that the Indians, who at first felt themselves particularly favored above their neighbors by the acquisition, had abundant reason to change their opinion.

The Riccarees were savage-looking Indians, and

more sullen and insolent than any we had yet met. The men had villanous countenances, which, in many cases, were disfigured by the loss of an eye, either from accident or disease. Sore and inflamed eyes are very common among them, owing to their filthy habits and smoky lodges.

Out on the prairie, beyond the village, were circles of human skulls, with two medicine poles in the centre of each, bearing propitiatory offerings to the Great Spirit.

The dead, dressed in their best garments, are laid on scaffolds in the open air, and after they decay and fall to pieces, the skulls are arranged in circles, the bones collected and buried, and the mounds surmounted with a buffalo skull.

While strolling about with several of the party, we heard shooting in the direction of the boat, and rapidly retraced our steps. We found, upon reaching the landing, that the Indians had attempted to come on board in numbers, and upon being repulsed, fired their guns into the air in token of their anger, and sullenly retired to the village, where they held an excited talk among themselves. The Agent having some business at Fort Clark, was proceeding thither, alone and unarmed, when a well-known rascal—the White-faced Bear—ran up to him and discharged his gun into the ground, close by his

feet. The only notice taken of this outrage was an involuntary jump, and the Agent continued his walk without further molestation.

After a tedious delay the Council finally came off. The chief White Parflesh was the principal speaker, and for a long time refused, in the name of his tribe, to take the annuities. The necessities of his people, however, and the tempting display of presents, overcame his scruples. The goods were soon put ashore, and speedily transported by the Indians to their village.

Quite an addition was here made to our party in the shape of some eighteen Mandans, men, women, and children, who were desirous of rejoining their people at the Gros Ventres village, some sixty miles higher up.

The various delays had consumed so much time that it was noon before we were ready to continue our voyage.

As the boat would have to pass close under the high promontory upon which the village was built, some apprehension was felt as to the probability of our being attacked; for an armed band of Riccarees was gathered there. The pilot-house had been protected by heavy plankings before starting, but, happily, the precaution was unnecessary: the *Twilight* swept majestically through the bend, and all thoughts of danger passed away.

CHAPTER III.

OLD MANDAN VILLAGE — A SPECK OF WAR — MINNETAREES, OR GROS VENTRES — SCENERY — A HUNTING-CAMP — MEET WITH ASSINNIBOINES — INDIAN AND SQUAW ON THEIR BRIDAL TRIP — ELK SHOT — TORTUOUS COURSE OF THE MISSOURI — FORT WILLIAM — MOUTH OF THE YELLOW-STONE — FORT UNION — RETURN TO FORT ATKINSON.

NINE miles above the Riccarees, at the mouth of Little Knife River, was a small village of Mandans. Most of the survivors of this nearly extinct tribe live with the Rees and Gros Ventres, but a few families still remained here to cultivate their old cornfields, which, from present appearances, promised an abundant yield.

At sundown, when we stopped to cut wood as usual, our Indians went out to look for game, but hastily returned, saying that they had discovered Sioux on horseback. This intelligence caused considerable alarm among them, and the whole party ascended to the hurricane deck, and were soon in battle-array. I was greatly amused at watching one of the Indians load his fusee. After a double hand-

ful of powder, he put in nine half-ounce balls, one upon another, with a large wad of red flannel between each. The gun was literally loaded halfway up to the muzzle, and it seemed to me as if the safest place when fired off would have been directly in front. While the warriors kept watch on deck, the squaws voluntarily assisted the voyageurs in carrying heavy logs of wood on board, which had been previously chopped down and cut into convenient lengths for transportation.

The following morning witnessed our arrival at the village of the Minnetarees, or, as they are commonly called, but without the slightest reason, Gros Ventres.

The lodges were precisely like those of the Rees, and the village was similarly built upon a commanding bluff, surrounded by a fine expanse of prairie, while the windings of the river could be traced for many miles. One side of the village was protected by the swift current of the Missouri, and the remainder by pickets, which made it perfectly secure against attack.

Fort Atkinson, on the lower side, and Fort Berthold, on the upper, were the rival trading establishments. As it was at the former of these that I made my home for several years, a full description will be reserved for another chapter.

We found but very few Indians here; in fact, scarcely any but the old people and children, the rest being away hunting, under the lead of Noc-pitts-ee-toh-pish, or Four-Bears, their principal chief. To land the supplies, and give Col. Redfield an opportunity to hold the inevitable Council with his "red children," detained us several hours, but by afternoon we were again en route, and about dusk passed the mouth of the Little Missouri, at this season a stream of considerable magnitude. The next day we entered upon the Grand Detour, or Big Bend of the Missouri. This bend is nearly seventy miles around, and not more than eighteen across at the narrowest part; it commences at Shell Creek and terminates at Knife River. Buffalo are usually found in great numbers in this region; but as the "running" season had not yet commenced, none of the vast herds were on the river, and up to this time we had only seen a few bulls. The scenery from this point grows bolder and more imposing; ranges of towering clay bluffs of the most fantastic shapes, often resembling gigantic ruins, meet the eye. All colors are here depicted, from the darkest blue to a bright vermilion; and when the rays of the sun light up their walls and towers, the effect is picturesque in the extreme, reminding one of castles in the old world. Many of these bluffs are hun-

dreds of feet high, and so steep as to be inaccessible save to the big-horn or Rocky Mountain goat.

About the middle of the bend we met the hunting-band of Gros Ventres, who had not found any buffalo yet, and were in a starving condition, their main subsistence being upon roots and berries.

The same evening we stopped a few minutes with a party of Assinniboines; their village of a hundred and fifty lodges was encamped close at hand. They were on their way to the Yellowstone to meet the rest of the nation and receive their annuities.

These Assinniboines seemed to be very poor, having but few horses, and depending almost entirely upon their dogs, which were very numerous, as their beasts of burden. Of course we had to stop with them a short time, after which we continued on, and, as it was a bright clear night, kept running until the moon went down. We gained here an accession to our party in the persons of an Indian and his squaw, evidently on their bridal trip, and most devoted in their attentions to each other, to the great amusement of the spectators.

The following morning a gang of elk was discovered crossing the river ahead of the boat, but before we neared them they had disappeared in the forest, with the exception of a doe, which came trotting along utterly regardless of our proximity. The

cause of her apparent boldness was soon explained by the fact that a fawn was seen swimming rapidly down stream, unable to climb the steep bank with the rest, and its mother was keeping up with it and guiding it until they should come to a place low enough for it to scramble out. The boat's course was altered so as to bring her close in shore, and our Indian, fitting an arrow to his bow, crouched down on the guards watching his opportunity. The elk, in its anxiety for its young one, had lost its usual timidity, and, instead of fleeing to the forest, came hesitatingly within a few yards of us. The Indian's shaft now struck it deep in the shoulder, too far back, however, to take immediate effect, and the stricken animal, giving two or three convulsive bounds, dashed through the underbrush and was lost to view. The yawl, in the meantime, had been sent in pursuit of the fawn, and shortly returning with the little captive, comfortable quarters were provided for it on board. After this exciting little incident, a band of buffalo, the first we had seen on the trip, was discovered, barely distinguishable in the dim distance.

Our Indian, who rejoiced in the title of the Son of the Pipe, was unremitting in his attentions to his little squaw, and never was lover more devoted to his fair mistress than was this dusky warrior to his

prairie bird. Their favorite haunt was in the shade of the pilot's house; here they enjoyed themselves to their heart's content, and derived inexhaustible amusement from painting their swarthy countenances with vermilion in all the variations their vivid imaginations could devise. After one coat of paint had been laid on, they would mutually admire each other; then, upon due deliberation, would rub it off and try another fashion.

A delightfully refreshing shower at the close of the hot and sultry day drove the lovers from their trysting-place, and soon after the boat stopped to wood

Could a painter have transferred that scene to canvas, he would have made a glorious picture. The storm had passed over behind the forest, the heavy clouds formed a background, as if a sable curtain had been drawn across, while the golden beams of the setting sun threw into strong relief the figures of the men cutting down trees, forming a magnificent contrast of light and shade.

We were now on the confines of the Assiniboine country, and our expectations of meeting some of that nation were soon realized. A party of five Indians was discovered scrambling over the bluffs, evidently with the intention of intercepting the boat. When taken on board they proved to be

Assinniboines on the war-path against the Oncpapahs; each one carried a bundle of dry meat slung on his back, so as to obviate the dangerous necessity of hunting in an enemy's country. All were armed with fusees and bows and arrows, and carried, in addition, lariats to bring back the horses they expected to steal.

The Missouri had now become very narrow and remarkably crooked, curving repeatedly upon itself; but the channel was better and more easily navigated than in the lower river. In the afternoon we came in sight of Fort William, three miles below the mouth of the Yellowstone, where we landed. Many Assinniboines were encamped around the fort, awaiting their annuities. While discharging the supplies for this post, it was determined by Major Clark, the principal Bourgeois of the company, to abandon it and establish a new one some eighty miles up the river. No sooner said than done. All the *materiel* of the fort was in an incredibly short time shipped aboard the *Twilight*, leaving the robes and peltries to be taken on the return voyage.

For several years past the country around the Yellowstone had been completely overrun by strong war parties of Sioux, bound against the Crows and Assinniboines, who, if they fell in with white men, did not hesitate to rob and often kill. So daring

had they become of late that it was almost impossible for the hunters to go out after game; the horses were run off in broad daylight under the very guns of the fort, and during certain seasons of the year the most untiring vigilance was necessary to avoid surprise. In consequence, the Assinniboines were afraid to come down to trade, and, under these circumstances, the removal of Fort William to the heart of their hunting-grounds could hardly fail to be advantageous in every point of view.

Everything having been received on board, we left for Fort Union, the post of the American Fur Company, distant by water nine miles, though by land only three. On the way we passed the mouth of the far-famed Yellowstone, the largest tributary of the Missouri River, and whose waters flow through the finest hunting-grounds of the West. We remained at Fort Union all night to land Col. Redfield and the Government annuities. The fort presented a very imposing appearance, and being one of the oldest of the American Fur Company's posts, was admirably equipped in every respect. From here were annually dispatched the outfits for the Crow Indians on the Yellowstone, and the Blackfeet on the head waters of the Missouri. Captain James Kipp, the Bourgeois in charge, welcomed us with true mountain hospitality. We remained there all

night, and by the next evening had arrived at the proposed site for the new fort and the terminus of our voyage, more than twenty-three hundred miles from St. Louis.

Very beautiful, in its primeval solitude, was the spot whose tranquillity was soon to be rudely broken by the echoing axe of the woodsman, the rifle of the mountaineer, and the varied bustle of the trading-post. The startled deer sped away over the hills, the antelope halted afar off, and the gaunt gray wolf sneaked from the presence of man. Timber was abundant and close at hand, the Missouri's waters rolled at our feet, and the grassy prairies were literally stocked with game. With all these natural advantages, and the greatly diminished danger of incursions from the Sioux, the new post seemed established under the most favorable auspices.

By early dawn the work of discharging freight was commenced; the goods were piled into a "baggage" and covered with tarpaulins to protect them from the weather until suitable storehouses could be erected. Besides these, Mackinaw boats must also be built to carry the outfit intended for Fort Campbell, the Blackfoot post, a distance by water of not less than seven hundred miles.

These boats have to be cordelled, or drawn by men the entire distance, and the toils and difficulties

of the undertaking can only be appreciated by those who have experienced them. The men chiefly employed by the Fur Companies were French Canadians—tough, hardy fellows, who assimilate readily to the mode of life they are compelled to adopt in the Indian country. Several of the mountaineers who had come up from Fort William had brought their squaws and families along. These at once proceeded to pitch their lodges, camp-fires were kindled, and a new home in the wilderness, with its few simple comforts, soon established.

By dint of hard work, all the freight was discharged by noon, and the steamboat was ready to commence her homeward voyage. The voyageurs drank a parting health with each other, and the *Twilight* slowly swung out into the stream amid the cheers of those on shore, which were answered by her cannon. A bend of the river soon hid from our view the friends we had left behind, standing on the green prairie's edge to take their last look at us. Nearly twelve moons would wax and wane before they would be greeted by the arrival of another steamboat, and in that time what changes might not occur, subjected as they would be to the crafty hostility of the Indian, and the numberless perils of mountain life.

Swiftly down stream sped the good *Twilight*,

past headland and prairie, until, as the setting sun was casting its lengthening rays on the whitewashed bastions of Fort Union, she rounded to under the bluff. A short stay and we were off again, passing the mouth of the Yellowstone to Fort William, where a huge beacon-fire was blazing on the bank, surrounded by a group of wild-looking mountaineers, eagerly awaiting our return. Morning at length dawned upon the dismantled fort, where but a short time before all had been life and animation. It now had a deserted and forlorn appearance, and in a little while the crumbling adobe walls would be all that remained of what had once been a bustling post. We took on board the proceeds of the last year's trade, consisting of over a thousand packs of robes and peltries, and with a farewell salute, our prow was again turned toward the "settlements."

While passing through the Big Bend we ran into a small band of buffalo crossing the river, and Captain Shaw, going out in his yawl, succeeded in killing three, which were towed alongside and hoisted on board to be butchered. The following afternoon we came in sight of the dirt-covered lodges of the Minnetarees, and soon after the *Twilight* landed in the eddy below the village. The robes and peltries in Fort Atkinson were shipped aboard, and after my personal baggage had been carried on shore, I bade

farewell to my late associates and walked up to the fort in company with my friend McBride. Before entering the stockade I looked back in time to catch a parting glimpse of the tall chimneys of the *Twilight* disappearing behind the forest that skirted the southern bend of the river, and realized for the first time how completely I was isolated from civilization and thrown upon my own resources.

CHAPTER IV.

EVERY-DAY LIFE IN THE INDIAN COUNTRY — SUPPER — SLEEPING — "VOICES OF THE NIGHT" — MORNING IN THE INDIAN CAMP — GROS VENTRE CELEBRITIES — AN INDIAN POLITICIAN.

AT length I had arrived at my destination in the Indian country. For years it had been a cherished project to penetrate the heart of the wilderness and see the Indians as they really were; those too far beyond the pale of civilization to have felt the corrupting influences of its overflow. As the steamboat that had brought me here rapidly pursued her course down stream, I realized my complete separation from all former associations, placed as I now was among new and strange scenes, and dependent upon the uncertain friendship of wild and often treacherous savages. Still it was my own free choice to dwell among them, and, as my baggage was carted up to the fort, the novelty of the situation and speculation as to what would come next gave me no time to feel lonely. A crowd of Indians, chiefly women, followed, darkening the doors and windows,

and peering into the room, eager, with the usual curiosity of their sex, to behold the "itch-u-manny" or new arrival, and exchanging comments, highly amusing, doubtless, judging from the boisterous mirth they elicited, but, happily, totally unintelligible to the object thereof.

As evening approached, the gates of the fort were closed and barred to keep out intruders, and supper being announced, we proceeded to the kitchen, or mess-room, where it was served. The appearance of the edibles, it must be confessed, was anything but inviting; but stimulated by a keen appetite, I fell to and ate heartily. The meal consisted of bacon, coffee, and bread. Bourgeois McBride apologized for the absence of fresh buffalo-meat, for the reason that the Indians, having been much harassed lately by war-parties of the Sioux, were afraid to go any distance to hunt. The repast was, however, greatly enjoyed by the long-haired, wild-looking set that graced the board, all of whom had been on short allowance for several weeks preceding the arrival of the steamboat.

Night coming on, arrangements were made for my sleeping. A rough bunk of cottonwood plank was hastily knocked together, and half a dozen buffalo-robes made a comfortable bed. Before "turning in," McBride's squaw cooked some dried buffalo

meat and *pomme blanche*, which I found, with my improved appetite, very palatable. I was tired enough to wish for a good night's rest; the hope was vain. The robes composing my bedding were old, having been well worn by their previous owners the Indians, and, as a matter of course, were thickly populated by those minute specimens of animated nature with which savages are so bountifully provided. The active little creatures kept up their attacks most vigorously, and in such numbers, that, after vainly battling with them for several hours, I was fain to give up the unequal contest and retreat to the floor, where I spread my blankets and hoped to snatch a little sleep. But very soon my tormentors discovered my new location and renewed their assaults, until completely worn out and irritated, I began to think that the romance of Indian life was one thing but its reality another. However, after a few weeks I became in a measure invulnerable to these pests, and paid but little attention to them, regarding them in the light of an unavoidable nuisance. Finding sleep impossible under these circumstances, I went out into the area of the fort, and climbing to the roof of one of the houses, contemplated the unaccustomed scene. The surrounding prairies were wrapt in uncertain darkness, and not a sound escaped from the Indian village close by.

The morning-star shone brightly, high in the heavens, and I felt the freshness of approaching dawn. Soon a faint reddish streak became visible in the east, brightening even as the eye gazed upon it, and long rays of light shot upwards. Hazy and indistinct the outlines of the village appeared, and gleams of rosy light illumined the prairies, bringing into strong relief the scaffolds supporting the bodies of those now sleeping their everlasting sleep. The mournful howl of a dog, mounted on the top of one of the lodges, breaks the almost deathlike stillness. The notes are instantly caught up by others, and directly every cur in the village is taking his part with commendable energy. Commencing soft and low, the noise grows louder and deeper until it finally dies away in a prolonged wail; modulated by distance, the sound is not unmusical.

This canine *matinée* rouses up the sleepers; a stir is evident in the village, and soon the curling smoke from the lodges floats in the morning air. The squaws, old and young, followed by the usual retinue of dogs, hasten down to the river to fill their kettles, while the warriors from the tops of the lodges anxiously scan the prairies to discover "signs" of enemies. Everything appearing quiet, the horses are driven forth, each band guarded by a young brave, who takes them where the best pasture is to be found,

and brings them back at sundown. As the horses in the course of the day often stray to a distance of five or six miles from the village, the guards act also as scouts, and ranging over the surrounding hills, serve not only to discover game, (*i. e.* buffalo,) but also the approach of a war party. Timely alarm can thus be given, and the horses hurried in, while the warriors prepare for battle. As horses constitute the principal wealth of an Indian, and are the chief incentives to depredations by one tribe upon another, the untiring vigilance used in guarding them is an imperative necessity. An Indian without horses is reduced to a pitiful strait indeed: crippled in hunting, and unable often to carry home the meat he may kill, or to move his family when the camp travels.

When thus situated, he will usually act as hunter for some relative rich in horses, who by giving him a few robes now and then, in payment as it were for his services, affords him an opportunity of regaining his former position. Horseflesh is uncertain property in any part of the world, and nowhere more so than in the Indian country. A fine horse is an overpowering temptation to a redskin, and if the possessor of one to-day, to-morrow may find him many miles away, having changed owners quite unceremoniously.

The idlers, the *gentlemen* of the village, having

taken their morning bath in the river and made their toilets, which at this season seemed to consist simply in readjusting the breechcloth, wend their way to the fort, loitering around and peering into the different houses, in hopes of being asked to "eat," an invitation which they never consider amiss, and always cheerfully accept. Conspicuous in the van is old Mi-rantah-nour-eesh, or Raising-Heart, a tall war-worn veteran, bearing in the scars with which he is covered the traces of many a hard-fought battle, besides being lamed and badly crippled in his hands. He is our "soldier," chosen on account of his friendly feelings towards the traders, and his influence and ability to protect them from the many annoyances to which they are often subjected. He is, of course, a regular *habitué*, and is dressed and fed at the expense of the post. But although of a pleasant and smiling disposition, any injury done to the property or persons of the whites under his care is instantly resented. More than once have I seen him punish a young buck by striking him with the flat side of his tomahawk, as a gentle reminder that he cannot play the same pranks in the "white men's lodge" that he can in his own village, while the Raising-Heart is their soldier. The old man was not a chief, although his many dashing exploits when he trod the war-path richly entitled him to

that distinction. He preferred to keep a large band of fine horses, "make plenty of robes," and provide well for his family, instead of giving away nearly everything he possessed, although he would thereby gain the much-coveted distinction of being a "big man," which distinction is too often acquired at the sacrifice of wealth and comfort, compelling the family to live in a straitened way, and in a great measure shift for themselves. But the Raising-Heart, though not a chief, was very rich, and had an extensive circle of influential relatives, who, according to Indian custom, were obliged to make common cause in protecting one another, and in taking up any quarrel which concerned one of their number. Without a "soldier" it would be almost impossible to conduct trade or to transact business in this country.

All the wild Indian tribes look upon the whites as an inferior race, pretty much in the same light that we formerly regarded plantation negroes. They have the idea that the earth is one vast plain resting upon four huge turtles, and that the "whites" occupy a very small corner of it, while the rest is the exclusive and illimitable domain of the Indians. One might talk to them for hours on this subject without being able to convince them one iota to the contrary; but would infallibly gain for

himself the reputation of being an unmitigated liar if he persisted in asserting that the whites were as numerous as the leaves in the forest, and cunning and skilful beyond all expression. The poorest vagabond of a redskin that roams over the prairies, with little else than a breechcloth to hide his nakedness, thinks himself infinitely richer and better in every respect than his "Great Father" the President of the United States, supposing him to have some definite idea of such a personage. The Indians look upon all Americans, or "Long-Knives," as a nation of traders, who get their goods from "a cunning people beyond the big water;" and entertaining such a contemptuous opinion of them, it follows naturally that they will take every opportunity of showing by petty annoyances their much-vaunted superiority. The knowledge that an influential man, with a host of relatives, is "soldier" for the whites, renders the young bucks disposed to conduct themselves usually in an orderly and quiet manner, being well aware that any imbroglio that might arise from misconduct on their part, would end in Indian being arrayed against Indian, and not the whole tribe against a handful of whites. Thus it will be seen how the prosperity and success of a trading-post is dependent upon the efficient and conciliatory measures of the Bourgeois or commander,

and the friendship and support of a powerful interest in the tribe.

Another of our regular visitors was Noc-pitts-ee-topish, or Four-Bears, one of the shrewdest men, all things considered, that I have ever encountered. Had he been a white man, he would have made a consummate politician, for while keeping in good favor with both the rival companies, he never failed to enrich himself greatly by so doing. Four-Bears was a tall, noble-looking man, with long black hair trailing nearly to the ground, an ornamental appendage valued almost beyond price. He was usually accompanied in his visits by his favorite son, a hopeful boy of seven summers, who had, when only four years old, shot his mother with a gun, killing her instantly. This exploit was regarded as an evidence of indomitable spirit in the youth, who, it was expected, when old enough, would greatly distinguish himself on the war-path. The chief invariably entered the Bourgeois' house with a bland smile upon his countenance, and seating himself upon a chair, proceeded to retail the news of the day: how badly his people talked against their traders, and how disinterestedly he took the part of the latter, and pointed out to his young men that the traders were not only a convenience to them, but in reality a necessity. They were dependent upon them for

guns and ammunition to hunt with, and to defend themselves against their many enemies; for blankets and scarlet cloth to dress their women and children; and reminded them of the trouble the women had in the olden time to boil a piece of meat. Unsupplied then with camp-kettles, they were obliged to dig a hole in the ground, and after lining it with a raw skin, throw in heated stones to make the water boil.

Having thus succeeded, as he says, in convincing his young men, he expatiates at length upon the great advantages derived by the tribe from having two trading-houses, and the necessity of dividing their patronage between them for the support of both. He takes occasion carelessly to remark, that from his position as head-chief, any acknowledged leaning to one side or the other would exert an undue influence over his people; yet in his heart he favored the Opposition Company, because they had not been so long established, and their presence prevented the American Fur Company from charging the exorbitant prices that prevailed before there was competition. After talking in this strain, a cup of coffee is given him, to get which has been the principal object of his visit. Then wrapping himself in his handsome buffalo-robe, on which were painted the head-dresses of war-eagle feathers he had given

away in the course of his life, the chief stalks over to Fort Berthold, there to repeat his remarks with modifications to suit the change of locality. He expresses his great attachment to the American Fur Company because of its long establishment in the country, and its ability to reciprocate substantially any influence which he, the Four-Bears, might exert in its behalf. Thus both "*whites*" are assured to his own satisfaction of his disinterested friendship, and the chief returns to his lodge to gather a circle of his political cronies around him. Here the social pipe passes from hand to hand, and the conversation turning on public affairs, they discuss the expediency of inducing the traders, if possible, without pushing them too hard, to pay higher prices for their robes and peltries. After his horses were brought up for the night, he would pay us another visit, incidentally remarking that the cup of coffee given him at Fort Berthold in the morning was sweeter and stronger, and the biscuit larger than those he received from us, expecting us, of course, to improve upon the hint. If not too late, he usually wended his way to Fort Berthold to try his diplomacy there again.

The heat gradually grows more intense, and the bright July sun beats down from a cloudless sky with an almost tropical fervor. The Indian idlers

have all disappeared, and stillness reigns supreme where a short time since resounded the stir and hum of busy life. The very dogs are quietly sleeping in the shade of the lodges. On the prairie not one of the many hundreds of horses that were driven forth at the break of day can now be seen; they have wandered off to shady dells where the grass is always fresh, watered by never-failing springs. The parched and smoking prairie fairly radiates under the intense heat of the noonday sun, and the deathlike silence that reigns is broken only by the sound of the rushing waters of the Missouri.

CHAPTER V

EVENING — SPORTS AND PASTIMES — A PRACTICAL JOKE — AN INDIAN WARRIOR — INDIAN DANDIES — NOVEL EQUITATION — HORSE-RACE — DOGS — BEWAILING THE DEAD — A LOVE DITTY — SPLENDOR OF A MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT.

WHEN the noontide heat is over, the village rouses into full activity, and the idlers resume their seats and pass their accustomed criticisms. Nothing escapes their notice, and many and hearty are the laughs they enjoy at the expense of some "*wah-see-chu*" or "little Frenchman."

Sundown approaches and the day's work is over. In the eddy at the base of the bluff quite a number of Indians of both sexes and all ages are indulging in an evening swim, and a variety of aquatic sports extremely amusing to the lookers-on, if their hilarious mirth be any evidence. Crowds gather on the bank to watch the gambols of these water-sprites, and a line of squaws is constantly passing and repassing to and from the river, with their kettles for water to cook the evening meal. Droves of horses cover the prairie, slowly driven towards the

river; when they approach, the bathers leave the water, and their places are quickly filled by the restless, half-wild horses, who, urged by the yells and cries of their drivers, rush pell-mell in. After drinking and swimming about, they scramble out, and forcing their way through the incoming droves, quickly rejoin their companions. When each band is collected again, they are driven up to their owner's lodge and secured for the night.

Further down the bank several men are fishing. The one that appears to have the best luck among them is a blind Mandan, who goes regularly twice a day, following the path along the edge of the bank, and avoiding with wonderful skill all unsafe places. I have never known him to miss his favorite spot, and he always found with unerring accuracy the rod which he had hid in the bushes after using it. The Indians claimed that he was gifted with supernatural powers—that he was "Medicine."

Warriors who have completed their evening toilet now make their appearance on the roofs of the lodges. With paint and feathers, bright blankets, and tinkling hawk-bells, they stand, their gaze apparently fixed on some far-distant object, but in reality fully alive to the interest they excite among the young squaws, who eye them with ill-concealed admiration.

Tall forms stalk through the area of the fort with proud and measured tread, or leaning carelessly against an open door, observe all that passes, with seeming indifference. But let them catch sight of any preparations for cooking, and they will quickly enter and seat themselves upon the floor; a pipe is sure to be forthcoming and passed around, while they converse with one another with great animation upon the ever-fresh topics of war and hunting. Thus they sit and talk and smoke, and are sure to remain until the cooking is done, when, after eating the portion given to them, they rise, uttering a satisfied "how!" and take their departure, usually turning their steps toward the village to tell their comrades, without loss of time, of the feast they have just eaten in the "white man's lodge."

On one occasion, during the long and seemingly interminable days that always preceded the arrival of the annual steamboat, my house was filled with Indians, as usual; being, in fact, the headquarters of the *élite* of the Gros Ventres village. Meat was plenty in camp, so there was no immediate necessity to hunt; no enemies had been seen around for several weeks, and besides, the *mah-ti-she-sheesh* (steamboat) was daily looked for. It was a season of absolute repose, of masterly inactivity, for both traders and Indians; and lounging from the trading-

post to the village, and the village to the trading-post, was the only business to be thought of. I had become completely tired of the incessant loafing that never gave me a quiet hour during the day; and for a little diversion to kill time, filled a large coffee-boiler with water and set it on the hearth close to the embers of the fire. My friends soon began to drop in, and before long the house was uncomfortably crowded. In the anticipation, however, of a cup of coffee, they did not mind it in the least, but cheerfully, and with well-timed remarks, made room for every one that entered. Pipe after pipe was smoked, and an animated conversation kept up all the while. An hour passed, but no one left the room, being afraid to lose the expected treat, and I was ostensibly too busy with some writing to pay any attention to the thirsty souls. They waited with unfailing good-humor, attributing the delay to my being occupied, and indulged in a brisk conversation about engaging in a general war with the Sioux after the departure of the steamboat. Time wore on, my circle of guests was still there, and had not manifested any inclination to diminish. I now purposely left the room for a few moments, and on returning found them drawn as close around the fireplace as they could possibly crowd. One gentleman, known among us by the *sobriquet* of the

"Gambler," was just setting the boiler down, having evidently been testing by its weight, for his own satisfaction and that of his comrades, whether it was full or empty. That it was full of coffee was the only inference they could draw. One, unable to remain any longer, and not wishing to forego the pleasure of tasting it, drew my attention to the boiler, and plainly hinted at what was expected. I cheerfully assented; tin cups were quickly produced, and the "Gambler" was deputed to do the honors, which he undertook with great alacrity. The peculiar clearness of the liquid drew forth a remark from some one of the party, and the cup already drawn was poured back, while the supposed grounds were vigorously stirred with a stick, but with no improvement in the result. A brief consultation ensued, and they were unwillingly forced to conclude that they had been "sold;" but without manifesting the slightest displeasure, quietly left the room. It was soon noised through the village, and ever afterwards the Gros Ventres were satisfied to see a coffee-pot standing near my fire without waiting half a day to investigate its contents. The joke had a lasting effect.

Young bucks parade about on their fancy horses, some of which are spotted in a remarkable manner.

War-eagle feathers float from the forelock or tail of many of the steeds, denoting speed and the high estimation of the owner. Those who are so fortunate as to possess one, use the heavy Spanish bit with its long iron fringes, jingling with the slightest movement of the horse. Shrinking and fretting under its cruel pressure, he arches his neck, curvets and prances to the great delight of his savage rider. Preëminently conspicuous among the chivalry of the Minnetarees was the second chief Chae-shah-hor-a-hish, the Poor (or lean) Wolf, mounted on his magnificent charger, black as a raven and adorned with gay barbaric trappings; the chief himself clothed with the insignia of his rank and exploits as a warrior. Horse and rider would stand motionless as a statue before the gates of the Fort, and it was next to impossible not to admire this perfect living picture.

The Poor Wolf was an Indian to the backbone; he scorned the dress, food, and merchandise of the traders, as much as he felt himself their superior. At all the public dances and ceremonies of his tribe he was invariably present, and entered into them with his whole heart. Like the Four-Bears, he ranked high in the estimation of his people; but unlike him, though poor, he neither courted the traders nor feared their power.

The crowd gathering on the prairie close to the pickets of the village, shows that something unusual is going on. A horse-race must be the cause of the excitement, since five or six young men are galloping away in the direction of the creek, fully half a mile distant. They are naked, with the scanty exception of a breechcloth, and control their spirited ponies with a lariat tied around the lower jaw. From the tops of the lodges eager eyes are directed towards the starting-point, and a few brief sentences announce to the expectant throng that the riders are "coming this way." In one moment the competitors are spread out in line; the next they are hid from view by an intervening roll of the prairie, but the quick strokes of their horses' hoofs grow rapidly more distinct—Now they are close at hand—the excitement is at its height; for the horses are neck and neck: so closely is the race contested that it is impossible to tell who will be the victor.

The friends of the competitors yield to the impulse of the moment, and make bets; throwing down robes, blankets, and guns in the most reckless manner. The riders lean forward until they lie almost flat upon their horses; yelling, thumping their heels into their sides, and using the heavy Indian whip with a will. Fifty yards more will decide the race, and a breathless suspense prevails. Gath-

ering all his energies for the decisive moment, the Crow-that-Flies shoots far ahead of the rest, amid the wildest exultations of his friends, and careers on at full speed, until within a few feet of the edge of the precipitous bank of the river. Then checking his horse so suddenly as to throw him back upon his haunches, he wheels sharply around, and canters back to receive the congratulations of his friends, who are loud in their praises of his black and white spotted steed.

The young squaws are playing a game of ball, resembling shinny or football, inasmuch as curved sticks and feet are called into service. The girls are generally dressed in a *metukee* (petticoat) of blue or scarlet cloth, some being trimmed with rows of elk's teeth, a scarce and highly prized ornament, since it is only the two tushes of an elk that are used. On account of the difficulty of obtaining them, the value of a dress ornamented with several hundred of these teeth is at once apparent. The crease of the hair is painted with vermilion, as is also a round spot on each cheek. The little boys amuse themselves in shooting at different objects with blunt arrows.

In another direction we see three young Indian dandies dressed and painted in the height of fashion, with bunches of shells surmounted with small scarlet

feathers fastened to a lock of hair on each side of their foreheads. They wear false hair ornamented with spots of red and white clay and ingeniously glued to their own, and sport bright scarlet blankets lavishly garnished with white and black or white and blue beads. The long fringes of their deerskin leggings trail their whole length, and a foxtail dragging from the heel of each moccasin, completes the costume.

This trio of worthies is mounted upon a stout pony, whose plaited tail is adorned with eagle-feathers and the impress of a hand stamped with white clay upon his flanks.

In this style they wend their way slowly through the village, the first one guiding and urging on the steed, who by his sluggish gait plainly shows his disapproval of this style of equitation. The middle one is singing at the top of his lungs, assisted by the third, whenever he is not obliged to give his whole attention to avoid sliding over the horse's tail.

Those invaluable but greatly abused members of the community, the dogs, take advantage of the temporary inattention of the women to prowl among the lodges, in hopes of being able to steal something edible. One has found a slice of meat, and is bearing it off, foolishly thinking to enjoy it by himself. In an instant a hundred hungry, wolfish curs seize upon it, and there is a prodigious uproar, a grand

flourish of tails, and much snapping though but little biting. In the confusion, some cunning old dog, watching his chance, picks up the coveted morsel and bolts it down while the rest are blindly fighting for it. The disturbance, however slight, is sufficient to draw the attention of one of the squaws, who picks up whatever comes first to hand, be it a billet of wood, a kettle, or an axe, and hurls it at the assembly with the complimentary remark "Nar-har-ah-suk-kuk," (Go away, you fools,) which advice is promptly heeded.

When meat is plenty in camp, the dogs get fat and look well, but in times of scarcity they have to pick up whatever they can find, and are often driven to the most revolting means of satisfying their hunger.

The sun has long since gone down, but the rays of his departing splendor illumine everything with a soft golden light. The tall cottonwoods across the river look fresh and green as in early spring-time. The prairie is deserted; the last band of horses has disappeared within the picketed enclosure of the village; the gates of the fort are closed and locked, and the sounds of life in the Indian camp grow fainter and fewer. Will night and darkness ever come? It is late, quite late, yet so pure is the

atmosphere that one is still able to read by the light of the stars glittering in the calm, clear sky.

A woman is wailing by the dead body of her husband on one of the scaffolds. The sound is mournful in the extreme, as if her heart was broken with a grief that could not be comforted.

Her husband had fallen in a battle with the Sioux. More than twelve moons have waxed and waned since he started with his warriors on that fatal war-path. Her eyes are tearless, and there is little real sorrow in her lamentation. When she has cried long enough she will return to her lodge and enter into any domestic occupation or amusement that may be going on. Should there be a dance in the village, she will quickly rub a little vermilion on her cheeks and join in the revelry, to all appearances as gay as the gayest.

As the sounds of grief die away, the voice of a young buck is heard singing a love-ditty, which an inexperienced ear might find difficult to distinguish from a lament for the dead.

The night advances, and even these sounds are at length hushed. The perfect stillness that reigns over everything is broken only by the sullen, ceaseless roar of the Missouri, or the occasional whistle of an elk, borne faintly on the evening breeze. Now and then a crash tells of some portion of the

river's bank, undermined by the rushing of the current, crumbling in, often bringing with it some noble forest-tree, which is swept into the whirl of angry waters to be carried along until, stripped of its fair proportions, it is cast a shapeless log on some distant sand-bar.

The scene varies; bright and dazzling the Northern Lights flash up high into the starlit sky, dimming the evening's early glories by their greater splendor.

Gradually they too fade away, but the stars still glitter in the heavens, and the full beams of the rising "harvest moon" shed their soft, silvery light over forest and prairie. Insensibly

"Sleep and oblivion reign over all."

Such were the scenes and such often the routine of a midsummer's day and night in the far-off wilderness of the Northwest.

CHAPTER VI.

DESCRIPTION OF A TRADING-POST — DOMESTIC ECONOMY — BUFFALO! — BULL-BOATS — DEPARTURE OF THE INDIAN HUNTERS — THE "SURROUND" — "MAKING MEDICINE."

FORT Atkinson was, at the time I speak of, a new erection and but partially finished. The buildings formerly occupied by the Company had been put up some years previously and had become so dilapidated with age and neglect, as to be almost unfit for use; making their renewal an imperative necessity. The new Fort was one hundred and twenty feet square, which was sufficiently spacious for all the requirements of the trade. It was built on the lower end of the high bluff bank, about two hundred feet from the river, and nearly the same distance from the Indian village.

A row of four houses of hewn timber, one story high, was already completely finished. The first house was used as an "Indian room." Here the "pipe" was kept, and here the two interpreters, Paquenode and Malnouri, dwelt, with their Indian wives and half-breed progeny. Rude benches were

placed around the sides to accommodate the Indian visitors, who constantly dropped in at all times to smoke and gossip. It was in short a kind of Exchange, where the news of the day was retailed from one to another. The building adjoining was intended for the men's quarter, but at present was used as a storehouse. The one next above was the Bourgeois' house or headquarters. Here McBride and I dwelt in glorious independence. The interior arrangements of this abode were in a style suited to the place, and very cosy and comfortable. Two rough bedsteads of cottonwood slabs stood in opposite corners. The bedding consisted of buffalo robes, and the rough frames of the bedsteads were partially concealed by curtains of gaudy calico, which gave a certain finish to the interior. The wide-spreading horns of an elk occupied a conspicuous position on the wall, from the antlers of which hung powder-horns and bullet-pouches, with shoulder-straps of scarlet cloth elaborately worked with beads. Bridles, "mountain" saddles, apishamores, lariats, and other equipments decorated the walls; from which were also suspended rifles and shot-guns, always loaded and ready for use, protected by fringed deerskin covers. There were also a few rough chairs, the seats being formed of raw-hide cords; these, with a clumsy table completed the furniture.

A barrel of water stood by the door, and a tin pan hanging from a nail close by, afforded a convenient substitute for a wash-bowl and appurtenances. The appearance of all the houses was greatly improved by being washed, both inside and out, with the white clay that abounds in this region, and is generally used by the Indians to clean their robes and dresses from grease and dirt, also rendering them soft and pliable.

Adjoining the Bourgeois' house was the kitchen and mess-room, the presiding genius of which seemed to take greater delight in declaiming against the Indians and waging war upon the innumerable flies, than in the discharge of his duties, about which, if the truth must be told, his knowledge was not over-extensive. On the opposite side of the area a row, of similar length, was building, intended as a storehouse for goods and furs. Material sufficient was on the ground to finish all these improvements before cold weather set in. Three sides of the fort were enclosed with a substantial stockade of hewn timbers, sixteen feet in height. Each picket had a face of about twelve inches by six in thickness, and was strongly set three feet in the ground, secured at the top by a heavy wooden plate or sill. The unenclosed side was occupied by the remaining buildings of the old fort, which eventually

would all be removed and rebuilt to correspond with the new part. The work was pushed on vigorously, exciting great interest among the crowd of idlers, who watched the proceedings with the untiring patience of the Indian.

An Indian riding in hot haste towards the village one morning created a great excitement, while the guards at the same time could be seen hurrying in the horses from every direction. "The enemy! the enemy!" was the cry, and a general rush to arms followed. Whoops and yells resounded on all sides, and the alarm was fast spreading; when the scout, dashing up on his foaming steed, announced that a large band of buffalo had been discovered at some distance across the river. Preparations for the chase were at once actively begun, and in high glee at the anticipated feast of fresh meat, the squaws carried down to the water's edge the bull-boats in which to ferry the hunters over. These boats, which are necessary adjuncts to every Gros Ventre lodge, are made of the fresh hide of a buffalo-bull stretched over a framework of willow. As the hide dries, it shrinks, binding the whole together with great strength. In shape they resemble large wash-tubs, and will bear astonishing loads, considering the frail manner of their construction.

With proper care in keeping the hide dry and free

from holes, a well-made bull-boat will last a couple of years. They are ticklish craft to navigate, however, and unless the voyager is extremely careful to preserve an equilibrium, he will suddenly and most unexpectedly find himself treated to a cold plunge. These bull-boats are always paddled by the squaws, and very laborious work it is, since the paddle is thrust into the water only about two feet in advance and drawn towards the boat, thus impelling it slowly forwards.

In embarking in one of these frail canoes, the saddles, guns, and other equipments are carefully placed in the bottom; the hunter next steps in, holding the ends of his horses' lariats, which are fastened with a double running noose around their lower jaws.

The squaw then pushes the boat off, and wades out with it until the water becomes sufficiently deep, when, steadying herself with her paddle, she carefully takes her place, and the horses, two or three of which are usually crossed at once, being urged into the river by the shouts and cries of the bystanders, slowly and reluctantly yield themselves to the guidance of their master. For a while, although the squaw paddles with all her might, the boat makes no headway, but whirls around like a top. The struggles and plunges of the unwilling and

refractory horses retard its progress and momentarily threaten to upset the frail vessel, until the very violence of their exertions carries them out into deep water. The strong current bears them swiftly along, and the horses, guided and supported by their master, swim after, only their heads and elevated tails being visible.

The boats always start from the upper end of the village and strike directly across, but as soon as they get into the current are drifted down some distance before they can make the opposite shore. After effecting a landing, the squaw drags her boat out of the water and helps her hunter to saddle.

He canters off on one of the pack-horses, leading his "runner" to keep him fresh for the chase; and striking through the timber, halts at a convenient rendezvous previously agreed upon. When all are assembled, the leader of the hunt takes command, and arranges the details.

The squaws, inverting the bull-boats over their heads, carry them to a point above the village, and then set out on their return, reaching the shore considerably below the starting-place. The women with their boats over their heads resemble huge black beetles crawling along the sand-bar.

An animated sight it was as the hunters cantered on their dripping steeds through the forest-glades,

their bright-colored blankets and glittering equipments forming a strong contrast to the dark-green foliage of the cottonwoods and brighter hues of the red willows. The buffalo were in plain sight, feeding quietly, unconscious of the impending danger. They had divided into two bands, the smaller of which was much nearer than the other. Some were lying down, others were rolling and pawing the ground with their hoofs, causing a thin cloud of dust to float over the herds, while their deep bellowing sounded like distant thunder. Many of the bulls were butting and fighting each other.

The band of hunters emerged from the timber, and after riding a few hundred yards out on the prairie, came to a halt. A party was now detached and sent against the wind, keeping parallel with the forest. These were mounted on the fastest horses: those able to "catch" buffalo under any circumstances. The main body continued cautiously on, having two scouts in advance, so as to be instantly notified of any change in the position of the buffalo. A second party now made a flank movement on the small band and halted. The rest of the hunters rode on, and soon disappeared behind a heavy roll of the prairie. They then made a semicircular movement, which brought them close to the rear of the large herd.

The pack-horses were now hobbled and left; blankets and every superfluous article laid aside, and all being ready, at a given signal the three parties dashed forwards at the top of their horses' speed.

In an instant the buffalo appeared strung out in a long line, while the hunters, in an irregular body, dealt destruction everywhere. The fast horses soon distanced the others and brought their riders alongside of the "fattest meat." The dust raised by hundreds of hoofs hung in a thick, suffocating cloud, while the booming of guns, whizzing of arrows, and rush of the maddened herd, with the reckless riding of the excited Indians, formed a thrilling spectacle.

The cloud rolled away, but many of that band of buffalo were lying dead upon the prairie, and the hunters busily engaged in butchering, their horses quietly feeding near with trailing lariats. A few survivors were fleeing rapidly over the hills, and here and there a wounded cow stood at bay, savagely charging at her pursuer, while the well-trained horse skilfully avoided the shock.

In a little while the pack-horses were loaded, and the hunters set out on their return. The close of the day saw them gathered on the sand bar, preparing to cross back to the village. Masses of reeking flesh were flung into the boats; the saddles, apisha-

mores (old buffalo rugs used under the saddles, soiled with blood and sweat) thrown on top with the rest of the equipments, and the hunters taking their places, recrossed; the exhausted horses swimming passively behind. At the landing the squaws again saddle the horses and pack the meat, leaving the hunters to pick up their weapons, without giving themselves further concern. The shrill cries of the women scolding at one another, and driving away the dogs that are hovering around to snap at the meat hanging from the pack-saddles, add to the general confusion and excitement. When the returning hunters were first seen on the hills, fires were kindled in the lodges, over which the squaws hung kettles of water. No unnecessary time was therefore lost before a general feasting was in progress throughout the entire camp.

The very opportune supply of meat, which this hunt afforded, would however last but a few days, and another was therefore proposed, as soon as a war-party should return, which had been out for a long time, and for whose safety great apprehensions were felt.

The next morning two white medicine flags were flying on the prairie, each bearing a rude painting in vermilion of the sun and moon, to which they were offerings. An Indian walked in a circle around

them all day long, crying and praying to the Great Spirit, to grant him success in war and the chase. Near him was a small pile of human skulls, around each of which was bound a strip of scarlet cloth. His lance, thrust into the ground beside them, supported his shield and medicine bag. During the time that he was making this "medicine" he durst not eat, nor speak to any one, for fear of breaking the spell, and thereby displeasing the Great Spirit.

CHAPTER VII.

RETURN OF A WAR-PARTY — SONGS OF TRIUMPH — DANCES — ADVENTURES OF THE WAR-PARTY — CHIVALRY IN AMBUSH — AN INDIAN MEDICO — DOCTOR E-TEN-AH-PEN-AH — BLACK MAIL.

WE were enjoying the usual noontide siesta; the day was warm, and the village had quieted down to a state of general repose. A sudden discharge of firearms across the river changed the scene. In an instant all is excitement — warriors seize their weapons, and rush to the edge of the bluff, eagerly seeking the cause of alarm. Thirteen Indians have just made their appearance on the sand-bar opposite — it is the long looked-for war-party, — they are returning in triumph!

Their faces are painted black, and one carries a scalp on the end of his lance, while another leads a fine horse. They form a single rank, and march up and down the bar, singing and firing off their fusees. Bull-boats are quickly sent across, in one of which is the Long-Hair, who, as soon as he hears the news, announces it across the river, and is heard without

difficulty. Soon the whole party are brought over, and receive the warm congratulations of the old men, as well as the smiles of the squaws, and are objects of envy to the *bannerêts* and boys who have not yet had or sought an opportunity of distinguishing themselves on the war-path. For the rest of the day, and all night, nothing else was thought of but singing and dancing the scalp. Towards sundown the Long-Hair (so called from the length of his natural hair which trailed on the ground as he walked), celebrated as a haranguer, came into the fort at the head of a party of young squaws, to entertain us with the scalp-song and dance. All had painted their cheeks with vermilion and yellow clay, and wore their finest dresses. As they had been singing and dancing before every lodge in the village, the girls appeared rather tired, and the Long-Hair decidedly out of breath with his exertions. They danced around in a circle, with a jerking shuffling step; the Long-Hair beating a drum which resembled a very large tambourine, and singing "hi, hi, hi-yah, hi-yah," to which the squaws echoed shrilly, "he, he, he-ee, he-ee."

This war-party had started out several weeks before, in connection with a small band of Rees; making altogether about thirty young and daring braves. Their destination was Fort Pierre, in the

neighborhood of which a few lodges of Sioux were usually encamped, and they designed lurking around, until an opportunity offered to "count a coup;" *i. e.*, steal a horse or take a scalp; in both of which they had been successful.

Carefully and stealthily they made their way, subsisting upon dry pounded meat or toro, which had been prepared for them before leaving home. Lighting no fires when they camped, lest they should attract the notice of their enemies, they kept on, day by day, until, after a toilsome march, they beheld, from a distant bluff, the long sought Fort Pierre, and near it, eight or ten lodges of Sioux.

Here they remained concealed until nightfall, quietly awaiting the decisive moment, when success or defeat would attend them. It came at last;—with cautious tread they crept within an arrow's flight of the lodges.

The gray dawn is breaking, and before the inmates of the trading-post are astir, the Sioux have loosened their horses and are driving them off to pasture. The women take their kettles to the river's brink for water, and one old squaw comes unconsciously towards the lurking-place of her deadly foes to pick service-berries, which grew there in abundance. A start, and the hand extended to pluck the berries is motionless for an instant. In-

stinctively she turns to flee, but the winged arrow is swifter, and she falls headlong, pierced through the heart. The scalp is torn off with a quick jerk of the knife, and each warrior strikes the body, thereby counting a coup, to be emblazoned on his battle-robe, and placed on the Indian roll of fame. Flushed with success, and heedless of the weary distance to be traversed before they see their own village again, the victors rapidly and warily begin their return.

Dire will be the consternation that seizes on that little encampment when the mangled corpse shall be discovered. Who can tell but that her increasing age and feebleness would ere long have rendered her unfit to keep up with her people when they travelled, when she would have been abandoned to a fate more horrible. Better for her was instant death than to be deserted by her kin and left to perish miserably, or be torn piecemeal by wolves.

Continuing their retreat, they found a very fine horse, which had probably been lost from some Indian camp, and was in good order, or as they expressed it, "rolling fat." Highly elated with their success, they returned in safety to their respective villages, where they met with a warm welcome, the more cordial since they had been given up for lost. After leaving the Rees village, every step of their route lay through an enemy's country, whose numerous

scouts and hunting-parties could hardly fail to discover them.

A season of comparative quiet now set in; the horses were luxuriating upon the rich grass, and rapidly recovering from the fatigues of the last hunt. The squaws were hard at work hoeing their corn-fields, and exulting in the prospect of an abundant crop. Our storehouse was by this time completely finished. It was divided into three compartments; one for storing away the robes and peltries, and which was, of course, at this season nearly empty. The middle part was fitted up as a trade-store, with a high counter set back a few feet from the door, just giving space enough to admit two or three Indians at a time. Rude shelves of rough plank at the rear contained a small assortment of the various goods needed. Blankets, knives, gayly-ornamented bridles, fusees with their stocks profusely studded with brass tacks, blue and scarlet cloth, beads, calicoes, and all the glittering trifles that please the savage taste. In the remaining apartment were kept the provisions and goods in bulk, from which the trade-store was supplied as its necessities required.

After storing and arranging the goods, there was but little to do until the winter trade began. The work of enclosing the fort with pickets had been also completed, new and substantial gates hung,

and after the haying season was over, it was designed to put up an ice-house and "plunder-rooms." These improvements had done away with almost every vestige of the old fort. One magnificent structure alone remained. It was about eight feet by ten, with not space enough between the floor and roof to admit of a middle-sized man standing upright.

This building was at present occupied by an old Santee (Sioux) named E-ten-ah-pen-ah, (the-Face-that-don't-run,) a highly accomplished sinner, and a worthy inhabitant of the old cabin. He was a boundless liar, but always told his stories with such a serio-comic air, that it was impossible to listen to him without being greatly amused. For many years he had dwelt among the Rees and Gros Ventres, and was regarded by them with great awe as a "Medicine-man," or doctor, of extraordinary skill. Besides his squaw, a rather fine-looking young Yancton woman, and his boy, there were four or five old hags, habitual *attachées* of his establishment, who made it their regular headquarters, and lived there with bag and baggage. So it is obvious that, from the very limited size of this dwelling, there could be but little room to spare. All day the old Doctor, as we styled him, would sit, surrounded by a *coterie* of his friends, regaling them with numberless lies, but all so plausibly told that his delighted auditors listened with gaping attention.

The kettle was constantly on the fire, for the Doctor's hospitality as a host was proverbial, and as long as there was anything in "the cabin" to eat, he entertained plenty of company.

His son and heir, a hopeful urchin of three summers, rejoiced in the title of the Muskrat, and was usually called in to finish the remains of the feasts, which, with the willing assistance of two or three puppies, his constant companions, he quickly and thoroughly accomplished. The Muskrat ran about with nothing but his own skin for a covering, which was generally spotted in a tasteful manner with white clay; and after a meal his rotundity would assume such bursting proportions as to most justly entitle him to the enviable distinction of being a "Gros Ventre," regardless of his Dacotah parentage.

Doctor E-ten-ah-pen-ah came into my room one morning and found me poring over a book. Here was a new idea! If he could only get one! Much amused, I presented him with it, and then, at his urgent solicitation, wrote some sentences in Sioux, which he dictated, on one of the pages; and chuckling to himself over his prize, the old rascal hurried back to his abode.

In the course of the morning, while strolling around, I noticed an unusual crowd in front of his residence, and curious to know what ceremony was

in progress, looked in. There was the Doctor, with the book open before him, his eyes intently fixed upon the page, moving his lips as if reading, and occasionally turning over a leaf. He had on a pair of heavy silver-rimmed spectacles, and, as might be expected, looked profoundly wise. With difficulty suppressing my mirth, I was turning to go away, when one of his guests, who was evidently sceptical as to the Doctor's literary attainments, called me back, and asked me if he could read. Prompted by a glance from the Doctor, I nodded affirmatively, whereupon, with consummate adroitness, the old fellow repeated the lines I had written at his dictation, and then pushing his glasses up over his forehead, handed the book to me. I at once read off the same sentences, and his triumph was complete. After casting a quizzical glance at me, as if to say that we understood each other thoroughly, he closed the book, and looking around with an air of intense self-satisfaction, complacently received the undisguised plaudits of his friends. So the Doctor continued to flourish until it was necessary to pull down the architectural pile in which he dwelt, when he removed to the village and purchased a lodge, giving one of his two remaining horses for it. He was, however, constantly in the fort, and frequently got medicines from me, with which he performed some wonderful cures.

About this time five or six "big men" came into the Bourgeois' house and said that it had been determined in Council not to let the whites make hay this year. An interval of profound silence ensued, which was broken by one of the party asking that a kettle of tea be made for their refreshment. The interpreter was forthwith ordered to tell them that, as we were not to be allowed to cut hay this season, it would be necessary to save our tea to feed our horses on during the winter. This unexpected reply entirely upset their remaining ideas upon the subject, and after a short and awkward pause, they gathered their blankets around them and made a rather undignified exit. A day or so after, the Fat Fox, who was the principal spokesman on that memorable occasion, stopped in to see us in a most friendly way, and casually remarked that what had been said about not allowing us to cut hay, was merely a little fun—only "squaw's talk," and consequently nothing more must be thought of it. So this attempt to levy black mail from the luckless whites resulted in a complete failure.

A drowned buffalo floated past, when some young Indians swam after, and succeeded in landing it about a mile down the river, where it was butchered. When carried by, the meat was rank and almost putrid, but not too offensive for the delicate palates of the savages.

CHAPTER VIII.

GOING TO "NICKAWAY" — A PRUDENT GENERAL — AFFAIRS AT THE VILLAGE — SIOUX ABOUT — LUDICROUS RAGE OF A FAT INDIAN — THE PANIC — RETREAT — THE DRY PUMPKIN'S HARANGUE — HIS WARLIKE ANTECEDENTS — CAUSE OF THE ALARM EXPLAINED.

GOING to Nickaway* in two nights, near the Square Hills in the big bend."—So the Hawk told us when he came to beg some powder and balls, making the usual promises to pay liberally in meat when he returned. It was to be a general turn-out, he said, of all the able-bodied men, each accompanied by one or two squaws, to cut up and jerk the meat. The old people, who would be compelled to remain behind, were already in great trepidation lest the Sioux, after reconnoitring and finding nearly all the men away, would devastate the cornfields, and perhaps the village itself. Even the "General," as we called the valiant Paquenaude, asked permission

* When the Indians go on a single hunt, they call it a "surround;" when they go with their squaws, intending to make a number of surrounds, until they have secured as much dry meat as they want, they call it "going to Nickaway."

to accompany the hunting-party, for the sole purpose, as *he* said, of securing a supply of superior meat for the use of the fort; but others, less charitable, said it was simply a strategic move on his part.

The whole morning resounded with the busy note of preparation. Towards afternoon the horses were driven up, and the work of crossing them commenced. The confusion and bustle were at their height when Paquenaude began saddling up. He intended taking his squaw and child along, and as many of his effects as could be conveniently packed on his horses, three of which were loaned him from our stud, with the understanding that one half the meat they brought back was to be turned over to the Company.

The "General" put on his helmet, in the shape of a black handkerchief tied around his head, and shouldering his gun, when everything was ready, bade us farewell, with a lengthened countenance which was irresistibly ludicrous. No inducement could have been held out sufficient to keep him with us in the fort, while so many of the Indians were away. He took his departure with the settled conviction that we were doomed men, and would undoubtedly fall victims to the immense war-party of Yanc-toh-wahs, which *he knew* was lurking near by, only waiting until the hunters got off to make

an onslaught upon the village, and expecting when he returned to find nothing but charred timbers and mangled corpses.

By evening all the hunters were across the river, and everything had settled down into more than its wonted quiet. Our store was filled with Indian valuables temporarily deposited for safe-keeping, while many women and children, as well as old men, asked and obtained permission to share the security of the fort until their friends returned.

The Nickaway people camped on the edge of the open prairie, where their cheerful fires at nightfall lit up the surrounding gloom.

But few closed their eyes in the village that night. The slightest sound was anxiously listened for, and when morning broke and revealed no trace of the dreaded foe, the alarmed Indians breathed more freely, and felt as if a respite had been granted them.

Relieved of the presence of so many idlers, our building was pushed on rapidly, and we congratulated ourselves on the prospect of having everything nearly finished before their return. They expected to be gone on this hunt about "one moon."

The long line of the hunting-party had scarcely disappeared behind the swells of the distant prairie before a small war-party was discovered on the heights beyond the southern bend of the river.

Their boldness in showing themselves in broad daylight led all to suppose that they were merely the scouts of a larger party, so numerous that they did not feel concealment necessary. The alarm was therefore great; the horses were hurried up to a safe distance, and every one prepared for the expected conflict. Another night of anxious suspense to the watchers in the village followed, and the morning light discovered three arrows shot into the body of a squaw upon one of the scaffolds. She had been the wife of old Ara-poo-she, the Rotten-Bear, an elderly Indian of immense corporation, and of the mildest and most inoffensive disposition possible.

To the astonishment of every one, the Rotten-Bear appeared in a new character. Naked to the clout, with war-paint and weapons, he waddled around and harangued for all whose hearts were strong to follow him to glory or the grave, and avenge the wrong he had sustained in the insult offered to the body of his old woman.

His futile rage and impassioned appeal to arms excited only laughter and ridicule; for the Rotten-Bear was as harmless and far less offensive than his namesake could have been. Two or three turns around the village in the hot July sun took all martial spirit out of him, and when rallied about it, he seemed to consider it as rather a good joke than otherwise.

An interval of perfect quiet succeeded; but it was the calm which precedes the storm.

In the dead of night, (it was the tenth, I think, since the Nickaway people had left,) we were all startled by a most unearthly noise and yelling in the village. It seemed as if every old hag and every dog had had their vocal powers strengthened a hundred-fold for the occasion, to say nothing of the yells of the men and reports of fire-arms. We concluded, as a matter of course, that our friends had one of their regular paroxysms of fear, when a number of guns were discharged in rapid succession, and amid the most tremendous uproar that I ever heard, we made out to learn that the hunters had been completely routed by an immense war-party of Sioux, and a remnant only had succeeded in effecting their escape.

Bull-boats were at once put into service, and the exhausted and panic-stricken fugitives were safely brought over. The "General's" eagerness to bring us the news was such that very few crossed before him. The poor fellow looked jaded and haggard, and the black handkerchief was disordered, as if by the sudden uprising of his hair. He was, in fact, completely demoralized.

McBride, with the slighest possible approach to a smile, asked, "Are all the horses back safe?"

"Yes." "Did you bring a pretty good load of meat with you?" "None! I had to throw it all away when the Sioux *faunced* on us?" "The Sioux *faunced* on you, did they,—how many did you kill of them?" (Great interest manifested by all of us to hear.)

"Yesterday afternoon near sundown, we were camped near the Square Hills, when Red-Tail discovered the enemy rushing on us. Every Injin yelled and shouted and went on like mad, and some began to throw away their meat and got on their horses and *mooshed* for the village." "Did *you* yell any?" "Me! of course I did,—every one around was yellin' and screechin', and there was no use tryin' to keep quiet."

"I want to hear if any were killed."

"Don't know. I let go my horses as fast as they could run: it was so dark you couldn't see ahead, and me and my woman fell into a deep hole; it is terrible how my chest is bruised."

"Who was at the head of the party?"

"The Injins told a squaw to go ahead, as they could better spare a woman than a man if they fell into a trap."

"You 've played —— on this hunt, sure," McBride remarked,—a conclusion to which we all assented, and left the "General" to take care of his inner man.

At early dawn the air resounded with the voice of the old Dry Pumpkin, haranguing, and calling upon every one to prepare to revenge the terrible defeat they had just sustained.

"Men of the Hee-rae-an-seh, a black cloud covers our village with darkness. The Great Spirit is angry with us; our hearts are buried deep in the ground. Where are our brave warriors? Our women and children are crying. Rouse yourselves, sharpen your arrows and seek the enemy! Strike them so hard with your tomahawks that both hands will hardly pull them out! Make strong Medicine, and the Great Spirit will grant you a successful return with plenty of scalps and horses. Then will the women dance and not feel ashamed. Men of the Hee-rae-an-seh, if your hearts are strong, hear me! It is I, the Dry Pumpkin, that speaks; he is not a child any more; his head is whitened with many snows. Rouse up, rouse up, young men! if you are wise, listen to my words. Go and wipe out this disgrace, or the Sioux will laugh at us and call us dogs and old women!"

In this strain the Dry Pumpkin continued; walking around the village, and occasionally mounting upon the tops of the lodges to make himself better heard.

But unfortunately, his warlike antecedents were

by no means calculated to stir up a feeling of fiery revenge among his people. In truth he might just as well have talked to the winds, for none listened to him.

Years before, when a young man, as he was returning with his squaw and several Gros Ventres from a visit to the Crows on the Yellowstone, they were attacked by a war-party of Assinniboines. At the first sound of the conflict the Dry Pumpkin made off, and his hurry was such that he stopped not until he arrived at his village, where he told how his friends had been attacked by an overwhelming force of the enemy, and after a desperate struggle, he alone had effected his escape. It seems that the Dry Pumpkin ran away with such celerity that no arrow could possibly have flown fast enough to hit him, and his squaw, in attempting to keep him in sight, was overtaken, and ruthlessly butchered and scalped. As he had never ventured upon the war-path after this heroic achievement, his opinions and advice had very little weight. After haranguing until he was wellnigh exhausted, he came into my room complaining of feeling unwell, and asked for some medicine. I administered, accordingly, an enormous dose of Epsom salts, and saw nothing of him for several days, when he came crawling into my quarters again, leaning on a stick and looking considerably reduced.

He remarked simply that the medicine I had given him was "very strong."

By-and-by the Gros Ventres showed signs of returning reason, and upon mustering their forces none were found missing! All were safe, *minus* their stock of dry meat, which was lost owing to a senseless panic. They were in a splendid hunting-ground with every prospect of success, when one evening a smoke was discovered and also the form of a man, supposed to be a spy.

The alarm was given, and the wildest confusion prevailed; one frightened another, and amid the most heathenish yells and screams it was determined to move camp at once, and the pell-mell retreat commenced.

It was now ascertained that the fire had been kindled by one of their own hunters, who had been looking for a stray horse, and stopped to cook some deer's meat that he had killed. The Nickaway was a complete failure; their horses were run down and would require rest; they had lost all their meat, and were in a starving condition again.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MANDANS MAKE THEIR GREAT BULL-MEDICINE — THE INVOCATION — THE MEDICINE LODGE — THE BULL-DANCE — THE TORTURES — DIVERSIONS OF THE VILLAGERS — INDIAN RELIGION.

TO atone for the past, and in the hopes of pleasing the Great Spirit, so that He would send the buffalo close to their village again, the Indians determined to make their great "Bull Medicine."

The necessary preparations for this important ceremony now engrossed the attention of the entire community. The squaws were busy in arranging a large and spacious lodge, and cleaning off the area in the centre of the village, where the principal ceremonies and dances would take place. The making of this medicine occupies four days, during which time all who take part observe a strict fast.

The first day, the old Mandan medicine man, A-mah-she-kee-ri-pe, the Buck Eagle, came into the fort, and seated himself upon a pile of lumber in the middle, followed by a crowd who arranged themselves around at a respectful distance, while in a

subdued and plaintive tone of voice he commenced an invocation to the Great Spirit.

With the exception of a white wolf-skin over one shoulder, he was entirely naked. A fillet of the same was bound around each ankle, and two wolf's tails dragged from the heels of his moccasins. A cap made of a piece of white buffalo robe, trimmed with the claws and tail-feather of an eagle, covered his head; and his withered limbs were painted with red clay. Some trifling presents were placed before him, and after his adjuration was concluded, he gathered them carefully up and took his departure.

In the afternoon of the second day, I went to the lodge where the ceremonies were going on. It was filled with young men, some of whom had passed through the ordeal before, and were now merely fasting. The others were those who were to undergo the terrible torture, and around the interior were arranged their shields, lances, and medicine bags. The men mostly reclined on their backs; and a few were even asleep.

The Buck Eagle sat in the centre, near the embers of the fire, smoking a handsome pipe, and occasionally calling upon the Great Spirit. The warriors who were to take part in the dance, were painting their bodies with alternate bars of red and white, and dressing themselves in a piece of shaggy

buffalo robe, with a large bunch of green willows bound on their backs, and smaller bunches in each hand. They represented the bulls, and were six in number. At regular intervals during the day, they came forth, and danced around the open area, or public square, in the middle of the village. In the centre of this area was a circular structure, resembling a very large hogshead. Suddenly the Buck Eagle appeared from the lodge, with his pipe in his hand, and leaning against the tub, commenced crying in a loud voice to the Great Spirit. Rattles sounded from within the lodge, and three men ran out in a crouching position, carrying drums garnished with feathers, and seated themselves on the ground close by him. Two others bearing rattles, followed; and the signal was given for the dancers to appear, by a prolonged drumming and rattling.

All the people of the village now congregated to witness this ceremony, which they considered their most important one (after the dance of the Calumet) and covered the tops of the surrounding lodges, from one of which I had an excellent view of the proceedings. The assemblage behaved with the utmost decorum; there was no jostling or pushing, setting in this respect an example which could be followed with infinite advantage elsewhere. Then, from the medicine lodge, in pairs, with a jarring,

shuffling step, in regular cadence, with their fantastic dresses of buffalo robes and willow boughs, came the bull-dancers, and commenced to circle slowly around the tub. On the afternoon of the third day, the most thrilling part of the ceremonies occurred. The rattles sounded, the drums beat, and the "bulls" executed their stamping, jarring dance with unwonted energy. The Raising-Heart conducted me to a seat upon a log among the dignitaries of the tribe, and seated himself close by among some of his old cronies, with whom he kept up an animated conversation. All eyes were turned towards the Medicine Lodge, whence came pouring forth, and dispersing in all directions, a band of antelope, fifty or sixty in number. They were men and boys, of all sizes, entirely naked, and painted all over with white clay. Willow twigs were bound on their heads, in the shape of, and to represent horns. There were also frogs and several nondescript animals.

After dancing for about twenty minutes, the bulls suddenly broke away in different directions, mostly taking their course through the groups of women and young girls, who scattered upon their approach, with screams of laughter, to lodges, where refreshments, consisting chiefly of boiled mush, were prepared for them. Buck Eagle and his musicians returned at once to their lodge; and after eating, the

bulls followed their example, to repeat the dance within an interval of half an hour.

The band of antelopes rushed hither and thither, anywhere and everywhere: one moment on the tops of the lodges, the next, dashing through the groups of squaws, and then clustered together, plotting fresh mischief. The frogs kept near the big tub, around which they danced and hopped in a most grotesque manner. An old woman now came forward with a large wooden bowl of mush, which she handed to one of the frogs; but scarcely has he lifted it to his mouth ere it is snatched from him by an antelope, when the rest of the band dash forward, and in the scuffle that follows, the earth receives most of it, while the old woman retreats with feigned indignation to her lodge.

In retaliation for this insult, and with more agility than one would suppose them to possess, the frogs pursue the antelopes; but seldom succeed in overtaking them. Another old woman now comes forward with another bowl of mush; but before she has advanced many steps, an antelope trots up quickly behind her, and suddenly snatching it out of her hands, attempts to swallow it, but is thwarted in this by his companions, and the mush is again spilt.

Sometimes, however, the old woman will turn suddenly round, and throw the mush over such

antelopes as happen to be near; which exploit is hailed with intense satisfaction by the squaws.

So the sports go bravely on; while the bulls keep up their dance with unabated vigor. But there is a pause—as one by one, in Indian file, with slow and measured tread, forth from the Medicine Lodge come the young men who have been fasting.

All are naked, with the exception of a scarlet breechcloth; and their bodies and limbs are painted with yellow clay. Each one carries a lance decorated with fluttering pennons, and war-eagle feathers, and a fancifully-painted and garnished shield is slung over the shoulder.

They looked emaciated, but showed no signs of weariness, walking with a slow but firm step to the middle of the area, where they prostrated themselves in a regular line, with their faces flat to the ground, and continued thus in silent prayer to the Great Spirit for about a quarter of an hour. The bulls still kept up their dance; but the sports of the antelopes had for the time ceased, and they clustered in groups on the tops of the lodges, silent and attentive spectators. Slowly rising from the ground, the young men retraced their steps to the lodge.

The bulls now exerted themselves vigorously, the antelopes resumed their pranks, and two old warriors, Chae-shah-ou-ketty (the Bob-Tail Wolf), and

Mush-shuka-hoy-tucky (the White Dog), emerged from the Medicine Lodge, closely followed by a couple of the young men. Going up to two stout poles about twelve feet high and firmly planted in the ground, they disengaged cords of raw hide hanging from them. One of the young men knelt at the foot of the pole, resting his thighs on his heels; and throwing his head back, and his breast forward, supported himself in this position by his hands. The old men now, one on either side, with a common butcher-knife cut through the skin and flesh on each breast, and thrusting splints under the sinews, attached the thongs to them. The other young man was quickly served in the same way. Not a muscle of their countenances changed expression, and not a sound escaped their lips while this painful operation was in progress. Each rose to his feet, and throwing the whole weight of his body upon the cords, with the blood streaming from the wounds, tried to tear himself loose. One, as soon as he was left alone, sprang wildly to the full length of the cords, and then hanging with his full weight upon the sinews of his breast, swung back, striking the post violently.

Again and again he swung himself off, and around the pole, calling in the most agonizing tones to the Great Spirit, and praying that he might hereafter be

a successful warrior and hunter, and that his heart might be "made strong" to enable him to bear his present sufferings. After being self-tortured in this way for some time, he fainted, and hung, to all appearances, entirely dead.

The strain on the splints finally tore them out, and he fell to the ground; when his relations came forward and took him in charge, carrying him off to a lodge, where, after he revived, food would be ready for him, and he might then receive the congratulations of his friends.

The other youth uttered not a word; he was quite young, not more than seventeen or eighteen, and for some time walked around the pole, shrinking from the fearful test. At last, having nerved himself up to it, he suddenly swung off with all his strength; and returning, struck the post with such violence that he too fainted, and hung, a sickening sight, with the blood streaming from his self-inflicted wounds.

In no instance can the splints be pulled out; to do so would be fatal to the "medicine." In some cases where the sinew is very strong, it is necessary to suspend them entirely off their feet, and even increase the weight by hanging buffalo skulls to their limbs. One Indian was compelled to walk around for nearly an entire day, dragging after him six or

eight buffalo skulls. All who can pass through this ordeal without flinching, are looked upon as brave men, and strong-hearted warriors and hunters. The Four-Bears himself had gone through it four or five times, as the scars on his breast and limbs testified.

The fourth and closing day was mostly a repetition of the third. Those of the young men who had not succeeded in tearing themselves loose from the poles, were dragged in a circle by the hands, until the buffalo skulls fastened to their legs were torn out by the violence of the race; and it has happened more than once, that the tough sinew defying every effort to break it, rendered it necessary for the unfortunate sufferer to crawl off on the prairie, and there remain until it had rotted completely out.

It is not my purpose, beyond a few general remarks, to enter into any speculations or theories as to the origin of this, or other rites and ceremonies. I shall confine myself to narrating simply and accurately, such scenes and incidents in Indian life as came under my notice; for the reason that all such speculations and theories would be for the most part vague and unsatisfactory.

There are of course exceptions, but the majority of the interpreters, through whom such information can only be obtained, are usually ignorant, unlettered

men, who have originally been brought into the country as common voyageurs, and after a time, preferring the lazy life of the Indians, they fall into their ways, and thus by degrees pick up enough of the language for ordinary intercourse. It cannot be expected, therefore, that interpreters of such limited intelligence would be able to enter into lengthened and profound explanations of these and kindred observances, however well fitted they may be to act the part of translators.

When not in the employ of either company they live with the Indians, whose estimation of them is measured only by their ability to make presents, and keep their squaw-wives and their interminable set of "cousins" well dressed and provided for.

The Bull Medicine is intended to ask the blessing of the Great Spirit upon the tribe, but more especially upon the participants. That they may have plenty of buffalo close to the village, so that they need not go far away and be in danger from their enemies. Also that success in war and horse-stealing may be granted them, and they may thus become distinguished among their people.

Their fasts and self-imposed tortures are public evidences of the sincerity of their belief, and faith in the power of the Great Spirit to support them in these terrible trials, and hear their supplications.

I have always considered the North American Indians a highly religious people, according to the light they have: they *practise as well as preach.*

They all believe in an overruling Power, which they call the Great Spirit, and that He dwells in a beautiful country beyond the skies. To go to this beautiful country, or "Happy Hunting-Ground," is the crowning point of an Indian's hope; it is his expected reward for the faithful fulfilment of his obligations to the Great Spirit during life, by stealing horses, taking scalps, and general success as a warrior and hunter.

There he will be rewarded for all his trials and privations on earth; there it will be always early summer-time; the grass will ever be green and fresh, watered by cool mountain springs. Game will abound in the greatest profusion, and the hunter need never fear the whizzing arrow or whistling bullet of his foe. His lodge will always be amply stored, his wives will raise abundant crops of corn and pumpkins, and his children never cry for hunger. All will be contentment and happiness.

But, on the other hand, if he has excited the displeasure of the Great Spirit by refusing to undergo the "Medicine" ordeal, by laziness in war and the chase, and by his general worthlessness and neglect of all his duties, he will go to a land abounding with enemies, where he will suffer hunger and cold.

There, it is always night, and snow thickly covers the ground; and as if to add to the horrors of his condition, he will be tantalized by the sight of the "happy hunting-grounds," whose secure enjoyments might have been his

Thus it will be seen that the Indians look to a future existence, either of weal or woe, as their conduct during life may determine. Their numerous dances and ceremonies are but feasts and fasts to please the Great Spirit, and ask a continuance of blessings.

Thus their religion is essentially the same as that of more enlightened nations, differing only in the mode of its observance.

CHAPTER X.

WAR'S ALARUMS—PANIC AMONG THE SQUAWS—THE FORT INVADED—A MIXED-UP STATE OF AFFAIRS—"ALL 'S WELL."

THE great "Bull Medicine" having been made to the satisfaction of all, it now remained to be seen what effect it would have upon the Great Spirit. Day after day passed, and still there was no sign of the near approach of buffalo. The chiefs and old men were generally of the same opinion: that the "medicine" was sufficiently strong, and the Great Spirit would soon send them an abundance.

Many, on the other hand, including most of the young and impetuous braves, took an entirely different view of it. It was, however, agreed that before any further steps were taken in the matter, a proper amount of patience and self-denial should be exercised, in consequence of which decision there was a brief period of general repose and inactivity. But it did not last long.

One day, towards the middle of the afternoon, an alarm was raised that a large war-party of Sioux on horseback had been seen lurking among the distant

bluffs that loomed up beyond the expanse of prairie in the rear of the village. An instant and terrible uproar was the natural consequence of this unexpected discovery.

The "medicine" was strong; of that there was no longer the slightest doubt. The buffalo had been sent; but the approach of this war-party had run them off. Universal consternation arose: the men yelled, the women screamed, and the dogs howled lustily, while the scouts and horse-guards were riding to and fro over the prairie with the utmost activity, collecting the scattered bands of horses, and rushing them at full speed towards the village.

The clouds of dust raised by the hoofs of the excited horses partially obscured objects on the prairie, and the commotion soon reached the highest pitch. Powder, balls, and flints were in the greatest demand, and as the shades of evening closed around, the frightened squaws came into both forts, bringing their dresses, medicine-bags, and valuables for safe-keeping, looking upon the capture and plunder of their village as a settled thing.

The Dry Pumpkin, the Snakeskin, and the Long Hair, went about and harangued for the fighting-men to "strike for their altars and their fires," and teach the rascally Sioux a lesson that they would not forget for many a day. A dilapidated chimney, the

last remains of the old fort, was torn down by the squaws, by order of the Dry Pumpkin, so that "no enemy could be concealed behind it."

Our corral was literally packed with as many horses as it could possibly hold. The gates of the fort were shut at the usual hour and strongly barricaded, and every one looked well to his weapons, and prepared them for immediate service. It was not considered necessary for us to mount a regular guard, as all the Indians would be on the *qui vive.* Paquenaude got ready for action by tying his favorite black handkerchief round his head and giving his gun a fresh load, after which he took his station, fully prepared for the worst.

The evening was remarkably beautiful. The soft moonlight fell with striking effect upon the wild figures in the area of the fort, and grim warriors stalked silently about grasping their ready weapons. The half-alarmed horses in the corral crowded restlessly together; the squaws and children huddled here and there in groups, with their valuables close by, and a retinue of their favorite dogs sleeping quietly beside them. The women talked in low tones about the expected attack, and expressed great fears lest their cornfields, upon which they had expended so much toil, would be destroyed by the ruthless invaders.

As the evening wore on, they crowded into the

houses until all vacant nooks and corners were filled with valuables, and every available foot of space on the floors occupied by recumbent forms, too anxious to close their eyes in sleep.

The Bourgeois' house was manifestly the favorite. "Crowd in" was the order, and it was carried out to the strictest letter, and with such a will that it was almost impossible to move without treading on the graceful proportions of some Indian maiden.

The night was warm and close, and the effluvia arising from the closely packed bodies of the highly-scented squaws was infinitely stronger than agreeable.

It was late when I thought of retiring, and found that beyond making my bed a general repository for miscellaneous articles, it was otherwise unencumbered. I laid down, after merely removing my pouch and powder-horn, and in trying to stretch out my feet, struck something which I took to be a buffalo-robe closely folded, and without more ceremony kicked it on the floor. In falling it struck with some violence the rotund form of an ancient squaw, and commenced crying out with a vigor that fully proved the strength of its lungs and general soundness of constitution.

A commotion among the females was the natural consequence of my inadvertently kicking a baby out of bed, and all the other infants (of which I thought

there was a goodly number) added their full quota of music to the concert. By degrees everything quieted down again, but I felt constrained to lie very quietly, not knowing but that the slightest movement on my part might result in a similar catastrophe, and the remaining bundles on my domain (whether living or otherwise) remained undisturbed.

At midnight, Paquenaude came to the door and hurriedly whispered, "The Sioux are coming!" An Indian had crept over from the village and reported that the enemy were now cutting and destroying the cornfields. All were immediately on the alert, and a sleepless vigilance was maintained the rest of the night. The morning dawned bright and clear, and revealed no traces of the ravages of the foe. Not till the sun was high, however, were the horses driven forth to feed, and even then they were not allowed to go more than a few hundred yards from the pickets of the village.

The cornfields were not disturbed in the least, and when the mounted scouts returned, after an extended reconnoissance, without having discovered the slightest trace of an enemy, it was generally admitted to have been another false alarm.

A feeling of security being once more restored, the squaws removed their valuables to their lodges, and matters went on as usual.

CHAPTER XI.

HUNTING — HARVESTING CORN — DRUDGERY OF THE SQUAWS — ASSINNIBOINES ARRIVE — JOURNEY TO THEIR CAMP — INCIDENTS BY THE WAY — GAMBLING — TROUBLES OF A LAME ASSINNIBOINE — SQUAW MURDERS HER CHILD — BUFFALO BULL KILLED — PRAIRIE DELICACIES — WILD FOWL — A FAIRY DELL — CAMP DISCOVERED — ARRIVAL.

IT was now the latter end of summer, and I passed a great deal of my time in hunting. It was, however, almost too early in the season, and from the numbers of Indian hunters on the range, game was very scarce and wild.

About three miles above the village, after passing through a heavy forest of cottonwood, my favorite hunting-trail led out upon a beautiful prairie bottom with a swift watercourse flowing through it, which terminated in a lake. In the spring and fall, wild fowl in great numbers and of every variety, were here to be found, and Paquenaude and I enjoyed excellent sport. The ducks were now in their prime, as fat as butter, and made very acceptable additions to our larder.

The Indians went out to surround just often enough to keep from starving; but the green corn was fast ripening, and, with the quantities of small game daily brought in by the hunters, we fared luxuriously.

The only wild-prairie Indians that raise corn are the Riccarees, Mandans, and Minnetarees. It is a species of Canada corn, very hardy and of quick growth. It is of all colors; red, black, blue, yellow, purple, and white; sometimes a single ear presents a combination of all these hues. When boiled green, with rich buffalo marrow spread on it, (instead of butter,) it is very sweet, and truly delicious.

The squaws have a busy time harvesting. It is a season of joy and festivity with them, when their long and patient labor is finally rewarded by an abundant crop. In the spring, as soon as the frost is out of the ground, the women break up their patches of land. Every foot must be turned up and loosened with the hoe, a slow and toilsome operation. After the corn is planted and begins to come up, slender fences of willow are necessary to prevent the horses from destroying the tender blades. These willows have to be carried on the backs of the women a long distance, a few at a time, until a sufficient quantity for the purpose is collected. While the operation of breaking ground, planting, and

fencing is going on, wood has also to be carried for the lodges; for those great, round, earth-covered dwellings of the Minnetarees are very chilly during the early damp spring weather, requiring much fuel for warming, as well as cooking.

Day after day, until it was gathered in, the corn must be regularly hoed, more to counteract the effect of drought than to keep down weeds. For on these dry and elevated plains, rain seldom falls after the spring has passed.

All these duties devolve upon the women; hence it will be seen that when an Indian has a plurality of wives he is enabled to live by the distribution of their labor in comparative ease and comfort. From early morn until sunset, the squaws, old and young, may be seen, passing to and from their cornfields, with rudely woven willow baskets slung on their backs, in which they carry the corn to their lodges.

Fires are blazing in all directions; around which gather merry groups to feast on boiled and roasted ears. When the harvest is gathered in, the ears of corn are plaited into a "trace" (like a rope of onions) and hung upon scaffolds to dry. The variegated hues of the often tastefully arranged "traces" hanging from the scaffolds, give the village a gay and holiday appearance.

Each family reserves a number of the choicest

ears to make sweet corn for winter use. It is first parboiled; the grains are then carefully picked off the cob and dried in the sun upon a piece of lodge skin. Prepared thus, it retains all its juices and flavor, and will keep unimpaired almost any length of time. It is then put away in skin bags, and carefully hoarded for use on special occasions, or in times of scarcity. The "trace" corn is *câchéd*—a hole is dug in the ground usually near the lodge, some six or eight feet in depth; small at the top, but widening as it deepens, much resembling a jug in shape. Hay is next strewn over the bottom and sides, and when the corn is thoroughly dried, it is taken down from the scaffolds and packed away. The *câche* is filled up with hay, dirt is then thrown on and firmly trodden down, and every sign carefully obliterated. Each family has one or more of these *câches*, and as they leave their summer village early in the fall for winter quarters, the corn remains undiscovered and undisturbed until their return in the spring. They also raise black beans, pumpkins, and squashes; but in spite of these vegetable resources, hemmed in as they often are by enemies, and consequently unable to obtain by hunting a full supply of buffalo meat, they sometimes suffer greatly for food. Well may the season of green corn be one of festivity and gladness, for it

is then only that the women enjoy a brief respite from their severe toil.

About the middle of September, a party of thirty Assinniboines arrived to visit the Gros Ventres. The new-comers had been sent from a camp known as "the band of Canoes," by the chief, "Broken Arm," to beg a "little tobacco," (*i. e.* a handsome present) from the traders, and induce them, if possible, to send to their camp on the River of Lakes, about three days travel, to traffic for such robes and skins as they had on hand at present, of which they declared of course that they had a great plenty. Quite a number of Gros Ventres decided to embrace this opportunity of visiting the Assinniboine camp, to smoke the pipe of peace and friendship, and exchange horses. Our Bourgeois thinking it would be profitable, determined also to send an expedition.

That night, after closing the gates, we began preparing a small but well-assorted outfit, and drew rations for a ten days' journey, the length of time we expected to be gone. Roasting coffee comprised most of this preparation, and we soon had everything in readiness to leave at daybreak.

Bright and early we were up, the wagon loaded, and our horses harnessed and saddled, so that before the sun had fairly risen, we were several miles on our journey, taking a northerly direction. I had

charge of the party, which consisted of Paquenaude for interpreter, and a long-haired mountaineer named Bostwick. We soon overtook some of the Assiniboines, who were all on foot, and travelled along together in the best possible humor.

One old fellow took the lead, dragging a broken-down bay horse heavily packed with corn, the gift of his Gros Ventres friends. He kept up a measured jog the livelong day, with his eyes steadily fixed on a distant butte or pile of stones, landmarks by which he shaped his course, seemingly oblivious of the existence of any beings beside himself and his forlorn steed. At noon we halted by a little spring of clear water, and turned the horses loose to graze at will, while we regaled ourselves with some cold meat, and after a short rest proceeded on our way.

Our route led us through a rather uninteresting country, chiefly high rolling prairie, totally destitute of timber.

Early in the afternoon, we crossed a fork of a creek called Rising Water, and encamped to await the arrival of the rest of our fellow-travellers, who had been detained by some dancing and other ceremonies at the village.

Our horses were hobbled and turned loose with trailing lariats, so that they could be caught up at a moment's warning; and resting our guns against the

wagons, with powder-horns and bullet-pouches hanging from the muzzles, we began our preparations for supper.

The Assinniboines who were in company had but the one forlorn steed to look after, and all of us were soon busied in collecting dry buffalo chips for our camp-fire, there being no wood within miles. Before long it was blazing cheerily, and Paquenaude leaving Bostwick to pile on the chips, took the coffee pot and filled it with brackish water from the creek. Our coffee having been roasted before leaving the fort, I put a little into a leathern bag, and pounded it with an axe on the tire of a wheel, until it was crushed sufficiently fine for our purpose. By our united exertions, our supper, consisting of coffee and dry buffalo meat slightly warmed through, was soon ready, and as quickly dispatched. The Assinniboines built a separate fire, and as they had no coffee to make, finished their meal before we did. At dusk the rest of our party joined us, consisting of sixty Gros Ventres, and the remaining Assinniboines, all well mounted, and leading extra pack-horses.

The Four-Bears with his favorite squaw, the Hawk, and several other principal men, rode up. The first eager inquiry of the Four-Bears before unsaddling, was, "Have you made coffee yet?"

The horses were driven up, and secured for the

night by being either hobbled or picketed, our arms examined, and enough buffalo chips collected to keep a little fire throughout the night. The Assinniboines gathered around, and commenced playing a game of hand, while the Gros Ventres boiled a kettle of sweet corn, of which, after it was cooked, the whole party were invited to partake. Two of the Assinniboines were so absorbed in their game that they kept on playing in preference to indulging in the (to them) unwonted luxury of green corn. After the feast was over, we wrapped ourselves in our blankets; and the last sounds I heard before losing consciousness were those made by the horses cropping the short rich grass, and the monotonous chant "heh-ah-heh" of the gamblers.

Toward morning we were roused up by a cold driving rain, and throwing fresh chips on the fire, prepared our breakfast of coffee and meat, so that by daylight we were *en route* again.

The morning was bitterly cold and raw; and we rode with our robes and blankets wrapped closely around us. We travelled at a rapid pace, and an old lame Assinniboine, who had been residing with his family among the Gros Ventres during the winter, and had embraced this opportunity of returning to his people, found it exceedingly difficult to hobble along fast enough.

He had one horse and a *travée*, upon which his three children and all his worldly goods were transported. His squaw led the wretched animal, and old "Lousey," as the matter-of-fact Bostwick styled the unfortunate Assinniboine, toiled painfully along in the rear, using such exertions to keep up that the perspiration rolled in streams down his rueful countenance, notwithstanding the chilliness of the morning. All his efforts, however, were in vain, and he was finally left behind, loudly protesting against being abandoned in such a dangerous country, and so far from his people's camp.

A squaw with three small children was also left; she carried one on her back and another in her arms, while the eldest trotted along by her side. Some time after, a young Indian who had loitered behind came up and reported that the squaw had just killed the youngest "because it was too small to travel."

A grizzly bear was discovered a short distance from the line of march, but the whole party were in too much of a hurry to run the risk of delay by attacking him, so he was not disturbed. Our course took us through a most barren and uninteresting country, abounding in rugged hills and dales, making it very laborious for the wagon-team. Our advance roused two lean old buffalo bulls, and the

partisan or leader of the Assinniboines, the Red Snow, gave chase, and killed one after a short and spirited dash. When we reached the place where the animal had fallen, only a few hundred yards off, he was already butchered, and half a dozen hungry savages stood over the carcass, greedily devouring the warm and quivering flesh. A halt was made, the horses turned loose, a fire of dried buffalo dung kindled, and in almost the twinkling of an eye the kettle was boiling. The meat was so warm and fresh as to require very little cooking; it was too fresh, in fact, to be good.

As a titbit, the Four-Bears' squaw made a "*boudin*," *i. e.* an intestine filled with chopped meat like a sausage, but without seasoning of any kind. In the preparation of this dainty morceau, economy both of time and labor was well studied; for, as the intestine was gradually filled up at one end, the original contents were forced out at the other. A few moments' immersion in the kettle sufficed to cook it, and a much shorter time was required for the surrounding epicures to discuss it, which they did with indescribable gusto.

This delectable meal over, we were off again, leaving a fine feast for the wolves, whose forms could everywhere be seen sneaking over the adjacent hills. The whole affair—the run, the butchering, cooking, and eating—did not occupy an hour.

We toiled on until afternoon, when a cold, driving storm of sleet and rain set in. At one time it was so severe that the horses turned their tails to it and refused to proceed; whereupon, wrapping our robes and blankets around us for protection, we patiently waited until it should abate a little. The Indians lit their pipes and enjoyed a social smoke, and as soon as the storm moderated we hastened on as quickly as possible to make up for lost time. When evening came, cold, tired, and hungry, we made our camp at the head of Shell Creek, the scanty fire of buffalo chips not warming us, but merely serving to boil some of the bull-meat and coffee. Quickly dispatching our supper, we turned in and slept soundly, with the exception of several of the Indians, whose fears led them to expect being rushed upon during the night by a war-party. My slumbers were not the less sound for having such vigilant sentinels

We started early the next morning as usual, but in crossing Shell Creek one of the wagon-horses mired and fell, and was only extricated after much trouble and delay. The country still continued bad for wagons; it abounded in innumerable lakes or ponds of stagnant water, and all more or less highly flavored with buffalo urine. Wild fowl were present in countless numbers, and as they were very fat at

this season, we enjoyed rare sport, and feasted in true hunter style. So plenty were they, and so tame, that it was like shooting into a flock of barn-yard fowls; but no more were killed than we actually wanted.

Buffalo were plenty about the head of Knife River, but no stop was made for hunting, as they were yet poor and thin, and plenty of ducks could be obtained with but little trouble.

The sun, which had been hidden behind dark and threatening clouds all the morning, adding to the indescribable dreariness and desolation of the wild and barren landscape, suddenly shone out in all his splendor, just as we were about to leave the ridge and descend the sloping prairie to the crossing of the river, at this place not more than fifty feet wide. The grass looked greener and fresher than on the sterile plains we had quitted, and a few stunted trees growing on the margin of the little stream, the first which had been seen since leaving the Missouri, and the towering bluffs by which the valley was surrounded on all sides, added greatly to the extreme beauty of this fairy dell. I reined in my horse to admire its quiet and seclusion. Bands of buffalo were scattered here and there; some grazing, others rolling, and evidently enjoying themselves, while many were indolently lying down

ruminating. A large band of antelopes started up and fled swiftly away.

The wind was blowing from us, and the buffalo sniffing the tainted air, sprang to their feet, and rapidly disappeared over the distant bluffs. As we climbed the steep heights after crossing the river, I looked back. The scene was changed. The fairy dell was deserted, and had relapsed into its former stillness without sight or sound of animal life. Continuing on, this enchanting scene was shut out from my sight, but not from my memory, by the rugged defiles through which our course lay. After winding around lakes, and passing through gloomy ravines, we made our noon halt beside a pond of water, so brackish and stinking that our thirsty horses refused to drink. From here the Red-Snow said we ought soon to see the Assinniboine camp, and the Indians busied themselves in making their toilets. Four-Bears painted the face of his favorite squaw (the only one that had accompanied him on this trip) with vermilion, and then his own in true warrior style. His long hair, which had been clubbed up behind for convenience, was loosened and carefully combed out. He then dressed himself in his splendid shirt ornamented with long scalp-locks and dyed horse-hair. When all these preparations were completed, we resumed our jour-

ney, and after some hard scrambling got clear of the "*mauvaises terres*," and stood upon the "*coteau de prairie*," the great dividing ridge that separates the tributaries of the Missouri from those of the Red River of the North.

Here the Red-Snow called a halt and consulted with his comrades as to where the camp was likely to be. A butte was pointed out a few hundred yards off, near to which the chief expected to find it, but not a sign was visible. In vain our eyes swept the prairie, until dimmed with the intensity of our gaze we could no longer distinguish in the distance the faint line that marked the meeting of earth and sky. A pipe was lit and smoked; after which we climbed to the top of the highest butte, whence by the aid of my spy-glass we had the satisfaction of discovering a number of barely distinguishable points against the sky, which the Indians unhesitatingly pronounced to be the lodges of the Assinniboines. Whether we could reach them by nightfall was the question. They were a long distance off and our horses were jaded, but it was determined to make the attempt. The whole party pushed forward vigorously; some of the Indians singing, and all rejoiced at the approaching termination of our trip. I was riding alongside of the Red-Snow, when he called up one of his young

men, and ordered him to precede us, and announce our coming at the camp. The fellow was on foot (like most of his party) and had been trotting along for the last hour at a brisk gait, but he immediately quickened his step and went on ahead. A dark line of trees marked our approach to a running stream, the River of Lakes; it was a fork of Mouse River, and for a wonder in this part of the country, had a hard rocky bottom making a very good crossing. Toiling up the steep and stony bluffs on the opposite shore, we reached the broad plateau that stretches away to Mouse River, about half a day's further travel. Our party, instead of keeping in a compact body, was strung out over the prairie, the footmen well in advance and the special messenger far ahead of all.

The conical skin lodges were now plainly in sight, not more than five miles off, and Indians galloped out from the camp to meet us and escort us in. Buffalo, they said, were plenty; nearly all the hunters were away surrounding, and had not yet returned. Crowds of women and children rushed out, attracted by the novelty and rattling of the wagon as we drove up to the chief's lodge. The old man was out with the hunters, but his squaw stirred around and soon carried everything inside, so that when we returned from watering and picketing our

horses near by, the kettle was already on the fire, and a delicious *bos* (or hump ribs) cooking.

By the time supper was eaten the hunters returned, and the squaws were busy unloading the meat and taking care of the horses. The dogs, which were very numerous, as is particularly the case in an Assinniboine camp, hailed the arrival of so much meat with a series of prolonged howls.

After smoking a pipe with our host, and briefly detailing to him the principal news, we rolled ourselves in our blankets and slept soundly, without being troubled by the abundant insect life with which an Assinniboine lodge is especially favored, or by the proximity of several squaws, members of the chief's family.

CHAPTER XII.

SCENES IN CAMP — FEAST — COUNCIL — TRADE — ON THE HOMEWARD TRAIL — DESOLATE COUNTRY — HOSTILE "SIGNS" — INDIAN CRAFT — THE COMET — RETURN TO THE POST — BATTLE WITH THE SIOUX — THE DOCTOR CARRIED IN A BLANKET.

THE sun was high when we rose next morning, and after inspecting our horses (which were under the chief's care), returned to the lodge for breakfast. Large bands of buffalo were in plain sight from the encampment, and the hunters went out to surround again. The squaws were cutting up the meat which had been brought in, the day before, in thin sheets, and drying it on poles resting on crotches. Two or three of them would sit down with a piece of skin between them, upon which the meat was placed. They wore the usual elegant style of dress which appeared to be the mode with the ladies of the Canoe band of Assinniboines; viz., a garment of skin originally ample, but from being frequently taxed to furnish material for patching moccasins, it had become very low in the neck,

very short in the sleeves, and of so scant a pattern that it was in many instances a mere apology for a covering.

Chatting and laughing all the time, they cut the masses of meat with wonderful quickness and skill, into large and thin sheets, with the fat judiciously mixed, and then hung it over the poles to dry. After exposure for a couple of days to the sun and pure air of the prairies, the meat turns black and hard, and in this condition will keep for a long time perfectly good. The best meat is made in the winter; it is then fatter, and is partially dried in the smoke of the lodges, which greatly improves its flavor.

The encampment was in the middle of an open plain, without a stick of timber in sight, and the superannuated squaws sat in the shade of the lodges, nursing the children and scolding at the dogs, who kept prowling around watching their chances to steal. Other squaws were scraping the hair from the buffalo skins, and dressing them to make new lodges, of which by the way very many families were sadly in need. Some had cut down their lodges little by little to supply pressing demands, until there was barely enough left for a shelter. Sixteen skins sewed together with sinews, somewhat in the form of a cloak, and stretched over a frame-

work of poles, form a very fair-sized lodge, sufficiently large to accommodate eight or ten persons with their effects. But, owing to the scarcity of horses among this band of Assinniboines, and the necessity of using dogs as their beasts of burden, most of the lodges consisted of from six to ten skins only.

At this time they were comparatively rich, having recently concluded a treaty of peace with their old enemies the Gros Ventres of the Prairie, (a band of Blackfeet,) and obtained a number of horses from them in exchange for the annuities which they had received from Government.

While strolling around, I caught a glimpse of Bostwick eating in one of the lodges, and trying to make himself agreeable to a rather fine-looking squaw. In the "Broken Arm's" lodge, Paquenaude was preparing a "feast," to be given at the Council which we intended to hold with the principal men in the evening, after their return from the surround.

When the feast was ready, the camp was harangued, to call the "soldiers" to it. In a little while they came, each one bringing his bowl and cup, and the lodge was soon crowded to its utmost capacity. All sat with their knees huddled up to their chins, and deep in communion with their own thoughts.

The feast, consisting of Indian sweet corn and tea, was set before them, and Paquenaude addressed

them, urging them to winter with the Gros Ventres, which they had some idea of doing; telling them to give us all the trade they could, and concluded by laying before them half a dozen large plugs of tobacco.

They all responded with hearty emphasis, "How-ow;" and then lifting their pans of tea to their lips, commenced sucking it in with a loud noise, more like a herd of swine feeding than anything else. After the tea had been drunk, the Broken Arm brought out his pipe, made of a soft black clay, and after carefully cleaning and charging it with a mixture of tobacco and a weed which grows plentifully on the northern prairies, and is used by the Assinniboines and Blackfeet instead of the red willow, drew a few whiffs through it, and then handed it around.

When it had circulated a few times, the chief gave the signal that the feast was ended by smoking with the bowl of his pipe to the ground, and each one taking his pan of corn, quickly and quietly left the lodge. There were over thirty men crowded in that lodge during the feast, where there seemed barely room for four or five to move about comfortably.

Large bands of buffalo were in sight next morning, and the hunters went out again. The whole country

seemed fairly alive with the moving herds. The squaws were kept very busy in consequence, and the dogs, gorged to repletion, lay sleepily basking in the sun, and, contrary to their usual custom, took not the slightest notice of me as I sauntered about.

The old lame Assinniboine and his family, whom we left on the way hither, reached camp during the forenoon, all looking as if they had found it a very hard road to travel. Old "Lousey's" temper was not improved by the danger to which he had been subjected, by being abandoned on the prairie to shift for himself, and as soon as he gained the middle of the encampment, he commenced loudly exclaiming against those who had left him, and for whom, when they were young, and before he was an almost helpless cripple, he had hunted and assisted in defending against the enemy. Very little attention was paid to this harangue, and he was suffered to vent his indignation upon the four winds.

A buffalo bull, furious with his wounds, was driven close to the camp, and his dying struggles attracted all the idlers to witness them. Weakened by the loss of blood streaming from several arrow wounds in his side and from his mouth, (a sure sign that he had received a vital shot,) he tottered feebly, and as his pursuer rode up to within a few paces, made a desperate lunge upon him, which was easily

avoided by the activity of the well-trained "buffalo" horse. Recovering himself with difficulty, the bull stood at bay, trembling with rage and maddened with pain. In a moment he fell gasping and struggling, but before the breath had fairly left his body the hide was torn off and the quivering flesh cut away with astonishing rapidity. The choice bits only were taken; the proximity of the herds and the abundance of meat in camp making the savages dainty in their selections. A splendid feast was left for the dogs, numbers of which were skulking around eagerly waiting their turn.

It came; there was for an instant a prodigious uproar, a snapping of jaws and flourishing of tails, and the pack dispersed, leaving only the skull and some of the larger bones, and a patch of prairie clotted with gore to mark the place where the noble animal met his fate.

The next morning the squaws picked out the dryest pieces of meat, and the trading began. The lodge was entirely cleared of Indians, except the chiefs and a couple of "soldiers," who sat at the entrance, as much to preserve order by preventing the squaws from rushing *en masse*, as for anything else. For the next three hours we had a lively time: powder, balls, knives, looking-glasses, hawk-bells, brass tacks, vermilion, awls, and other trifles, were

in demand; and when we stopped trading, having obtained as much meat as the wagon could transport, the pressure became very great, the squaws fearing that our stock of goods would become exhausted before all were supplied. Many of the women were exceedingly angry when they found we would trade no more, and one old virago even went so far as to talk of cutting up our goods to shreds in revenge. A few trifles judiciously given, aided by the determined effort of the soldiers, finally quieted her down. The customary present to the chief for the use of his lodge was made, to which were added a few trifles for his squaw, which pleased her immensely.

The Gros Ventres were getting ready to return, and we then set about loading up the wagon and saddling our horses. When everything was ready, the Four-Bears and several others were called in to the Broken-Arm's lodge to eat and smoke before leaving. The Four-Bears and Broken-Arm exchanged horses, the latter giving a fine one and receiving an indifferent animal in return.

Making our way through the dense crowd, comprising both sexes and all ages, we left the Assiniboine camp, and struck out over the broad and sloping plain between the camp and the Rivière au Lacs, when the conical lodges, with their wild popu-

lation, were lost in the distance. Descending the rugged and stony bluffs, we recrossed the river and travelled on until sundown, when we encamped by a pool of brackish water so strongly flavored and discolored by buffalo urine, that it exceeded anything we had hitherto met with, and our coffee was, in consequence, scarcely drinkable.

A beautiful starlit night succeeded, and I was glad to sleep in the fresh free air of the prairie, in exchange for the smoky and crowded lodge of the Assinniboine chief. The following day we plodded steadily on through an uninteresting country; not a tree was visible; no limpid, cooling streams, with their verdure-clad banks, gladdened the eye. We saw only innumerable sedgy lakes of stagnant rain-water, the edges muddy and trampled into a quag-mire by the buffalo.

Near sundown we struck the pebbly shore of a very large lake of clear water, (the only one I had seen on this expedition,) and after proceeding some miles further, halted on Shell Creek, not very far from our old camping-place. After passing a quiet night, free from any alarm, we started again at early dawn, and soon leaving the rugged and desolate country of lakes and hills, were once more on the broad rolling prairie. Buffalo had recently roamed here in great numbers, for the grass was eaten quite

short, and other traces were everywhere visible. Large flocks of swans and pelicans were continually passing over our heads in graceful, undulating flight, together with immense numbers of ducks and geese, all taking their departure for more southern climes. A few bulls lazily walked along the base of the distant bluffs, and sneaking wolves, roused from their lairs by our approach, trotted sulkily off after stopping an instant to look at us. Animal life abounded; it would have been delightful to have stopped and hunted for a few days, but the country was extremely dangerous, being constantly overrun by war-parties of Sioux, Assinniboines, and Chippeways, one of which might cross our path at any moment.

Our Indians hurried on, and the Four-Bears would not allow a gun to be fired, since the sound could be heard a long distance in these still regions, and might be the means of discovering us to the enemy. The recent hoof-prints of a band of buffalo in full run were plainly distinguishable, which the Indians closely examined in great concern, and called a council of war. Buffalo never "raise" without cause; therefore they must undoubtedly have been disturbed by a roving band of Indians, but whether friends or foes we could not tell; most probably the latter. A young Gros Ventre crawled to the top of the next roll of the prairie, and took a long and careful

survey. Nothing was discovered, so we kept on, well together and ready for any emergency. At sundown we recrossed Rising-Water and bivouacked. No fire was kindled, and each man looked well to his weapons. Not a sound, except the gentle ripple of the stream, broke the silence of the night. Bostwick and I made our beds together, and laid down with our guns in our arms. Paquenaude spread his blankets close by, and we found much amusement in watching his preparations for the terrible conflict which he was sure was impending. His famous black handkerchief was tied tightly around his head, and his naturally sallow countenance looked ghastly enough by the light of the stars. He carefully reloaded his gun, putting a half-ounce bullet in one barrel and nine buckshot in the other; the latter he dropped in, one at a time, and as each rolled slowly down, it sounded ominous of danger. Woe to the "Injin" that should chance (by accident only) to get that charge into his "lights." The General's martial spirit was now aroused, and he was fully determined on counting such a "coup" as would make him glorious for the rest of his existence. Four-Bears crawled off quietly, and was quickly lost to view in the surrounding gloom. The Hawk, by command of his chief, sat a little apart, gun in hand, on the alert to detect any signs of enemies.

The rest of the party lay scattered around, in seemingly careless groups of twos and threes.

The Northern Lights flashed up and glowed until the prairies were almost as bright as day, and revealed the figure of a man seated upon the edge of the bank, guarding against surprise in that quarter. It was not the Hawk, for he was close by us; could it be the Four-Bears? It must be, for he had gone off in that direction early in the evening.

But why is there such uneasiness among the Indians? Wherefore are they gazing so earnestly at the skies, and talking to one another in subdued whispers?

In the North-East a comet, with its tail spreading over a vast arc of the heavens, was distinctly visible, and with all the surroundings, the bivouac on the lonely prairie, the startled groups of Indians, and the consciousness of impending danger, caused all that I had read of comets being the heralds of wars and tumults to flash through my mind, until I could not help sharing in the superstitious fears of the Indians, and wondering what it boded.

Morning came at last, and roused us all into activity. A fire of buffalo chips was soon kindled, and we commenced preparing our breakfast, which, as it consisted of a piece of jerked meat, simply warmed, was not a tedious operation.

I went down to the creek for a cup of water, and saw, as I thought, the Four-Bears still keeping guard upon the bank.

On my return I passed close by, and was amused to find the supposed sentinel nothing more nor less than the robe and headdress of the chief, cunningly placed upon a stick, and so arranged that in an uncertain light it presented an admirable counterfeit of a human figure, well calculated to deceive and hold in check the advance of any foe from that direction. The comet was the universal theme of conversation, and the Indians expressed the liveliest apprehensions as to what might happen. Some even predicted an attack upon the village, and all showed anxiety to get back as soon as possible, which we hoped to do by afternoon. We travelled all the morning, and when within six or seven miles of the village, were discovered by some of the advance horse-guards, who, after signalling our approach to the rear, came riding toward us at their highest speed, dashing recklessly up and down hill. We drew up in a body to meet them, as they charged headlong towards us, without attempting to slacken their speed, until within a few paces, when they checked their horses so suddenly, as to throw them back on their haunches.

A few hurried words to the Four-Bears, and an

intense excitement was immediately visible throughout our party. All dismounted; the pipe was lit and passed around, and the following news elicited. — The hunters had crossed the river the day before to surround, and after a very successful run, were returning in scattered parties heavily laden with meat. While passing through the belt of timber before coming out on the sand-bar, they were fired upon by a war-party of Sioux, in ambush, and several slightly wounded. The reports of the guns roused those who had remained in the village, and seizing their weapons they hurried across the river. Here they were strongly reinforced by the rest of the hunters who had hastened up at the first sounds of the fray, when the Gros Ventres became in their turn the assailants, and tracked the enemy through the woods to where they had intrenched themselves behind a rude breastwork of logs.

Contrary to their usual custom of advancing warily, the Minnetarees, maddened by the presence of their hated foes, and conscious that they had them in their power, rushed forward to the attack. After a short but desperate struggle, during which the forest rang with the rattling of arms and the whoops of the combatants, the assailants charged up to the breastwork and carried it, killing almost instantly its brave defenders only nine in number.

Several Gros Ventres lost their lives, and a number were wounded, — some mortally. While this information was being received, mounted Indians continued to arrive every moment, all riding as if their lives depended upon it. We kept on after a brief delay, leaving the Indians smoking, and relating the particulars of the fight. Upon reaching the fort the reports we had heard were confirmed.

The whole party of Yanctons, nine in all, were killed, and their bodies hacked to pieces. Each of the victors brought as trophies fragments of the bodies; fingers, ears, and scalps. A hand mounted on a pole was set up on the prairie, as a thank-offering to the Great Spirit. But the Gros Ventres paid dearly for their success; four were killed on the field of battle, and many wounded, some fatally. My esteemed friend Doctor E-ten-ah-pen-ah had suffered severely. Although a Sioux, he had lived among the Gros Ventres many years, and was therefore anxious, not only to prove the sincerity of his friendship for them, but also to display his prowess as a warrior. So he boldly sought the thickest of the fray. His left arm was badly shattered in two places, and he was so weakened by the loss of blood that he had to be carried in a blanket from the landing to his lodge by four sympathizing squaws.

CHAPTER XIII.

GOOSE MEDICINE—GROS VENTRES RETURN FROM THE REES —ARRIVAL OF ONCPAPAS AND BLACKFEET SIOUX— JEALOUSIES—SCARCITY OF MEAT IN CAMP—CHANGING FACE OF NATURE.

AFTER the corn had all been gathered in, the Mandan and Minnetaree squaws made their Goose Medicine on the level prairie behind the village. This dance is to remind the wild geese, now beginning their southward flight, that they have had plenty of good food all summer, and to entreat their return in the spring, when the rains come and the green grass begins to grow.

The charms of most of the squaws in this "Goose Band" appeared to have faded long ago: they were evidently past the bloom of youth, and their voices and tempers had not improved in consequence. However, on this occasion they endeavored to look their best with the aid of paint and finery, in which respect they are not far behind their white sisters of more civilized climes. A row of poles resting upon forked sticks is put up, over which are hung in pro-

fusion pieces of fine, fat, dry meat, which have been carefully saved for this occasion. A band of four or five drummers take their seats close to one end, and a double row of squaws next to them facing each other. Each woman carries a bunch of long seed-grass, the favorite food of the wild goose, and at intervals all get up and dance in a circle with a peculiar shuffling step, singing and keeping time to the taps of the drum.

The spectators keep at a respectful distance and enjoy the fun, which consists in the attempts of some of the young men to steal the meat from the poles, in which however they are often thwarted by the vigilance of a few wise old "geese" who are constantly on the alert to prevent theft. If successful, the meat is carried off in great glee to some lodge, where they cook and eat it at their leisure. These exquisites are elaborately gotten up with bunches of raven plumes fluttering from their scalp-locks, and stripes of white and yellow clay upon their bodies, comprise their only covering.

Finally, one of the old men (who have been thumping assiduously on the drums all the while) takes his place a few hundred yards off on the prairie, and a grand race by the whole goose band follows. All form in line together, and run around the old gander before returning to the starting-point.

The race over, the scaffolds are taken down, a feast prepared, and the meat remaining on hand cooked and eaten. For the rest of the day the band danced around among the different lodges, and of course paid a visit to the fort before concluding. On these occasions a few yards of calico or some trifling gifts are always expected to be thrown to the "Medicine" by the traders.

Two more Indians died of their wounds, making the total loss by the fight six. The rest of the wounded were doing well, and in a fair way to recover. Doctor E-ten-ah-pen-ah made his appearance for the first time since the battle. His arm looked very badly, being broken in two places and poorly splintered. It was greatly discolored and smelt offensively, with every prospect of mortification speedily setting in. But this did not appear to trouble him in the least: his countenance wore an expression of the utmost self-satisfaction at the part he had taken in the fray, and he used his powers of romancing so judiciously, that, coupled with the appearance of the comet, which he claimed to know all about, many of the Gros Ventres began to look upon him with awe as one who was really gifted with supernatural powers.

A large party of Gros Ventres had gone down to the Riccaree village, and their return was anxiously

anticipated, as they were expected to bring tidings of the whereabouts of the Blackfoot and One-pa-pa bands of Sioux, who, being just now on friendly terms, were likely, since the corn was gathered in, to visit the Rees and Gros Ventres to maintain the *entente cordiale*. These two bands are very powerful and warlike, rich in everything that constitutes Indian wealth; and conscious of their superior strength, roam where they will, trespassing almost constantly on the hunting-grounds of the Riccarees, Minnetarees, and Mandans, and sometimes even penetrating to the rich game country of their bitter enemies, the Crows, on the borders of the Yellowstone.

The Gros Ventres returned from their visit to the Rees, and reported the One-pa-pas and Blackfeet camped on the head of Knife River, loaded down with meat and robes. It was expected, as they were distant only about two days' travel, that they would be in very shortly to trade. A "begging" party headed by the notorious partisan, the Black Moon, had already arrived at the Ree Village, and a similar party might be looked for at our Post at any time.

The next morning dawned bright and clear, and the sun had nearly reached the zenith when the Indians discovered objects moving at a distance across the river, evidently rapidly coming towards it.

There was some speculation at first whether it was a herd of buffalo, which had been raised by the hunters from the Sioux camp, or the expected visitors. As they approached, the gleaming of their polished lances and the glitter of the small mirrors, which in true Indian fashion they carried suspended from their necks, proclaimed them the party of Sioux.

While they boldly galloped down the bluffs that separated the high rolling prairie from the timbered bottom, and were hidden from view by the intervening forest, there was great activity in the village. Bull-boats were carried down to the water's edge, and the squaws prepared to cross over at a moment's notice. Soon the Sioux emerged at a gentle canter from the timber, upon the broad and smooth sandbar; and leisurely dismounting, unsaddled their horses, and shouted to their individual friends or comrades, declaring who they were, and asking to be crossed over. The Gros Ventres eagerly responded to the call, and in a few minutes the sinewy arms of the squaws were urging their unwieldy boats over the turbulent Missouri. The saddles and equipments were loaded in, and the guests, carefully taking their places in the frail vessels, were ferried over to the village. They were at once conducted to the lodges of their friends and something to eat

set before them; generally corn, of which they partook eagerly, esteeming it a great luxury.

Their horses were carefully crossed over by the Gros Ventres, and driven out to pasture, while all united in extending to their guests every hospitality which fear of a possible breach of friendship and the consequent evils of war could suggest. No sooner were the Sioux feasted in one lodge than they were called to another, and so it continued all day long.

There were about thirty in this party, all warriors, tall, noble-looking men of symmetrical form. Their long black hair was carefully combed and gathered into a plait on each side of the head, bound with scarlet cloth, while the neatly-braided scalp-lock was adorned with a strip of otterskin. They were clothed in finely-dressed deerskin shirts, beautifully worked with stained porcupine quills of various colors, and fringed with scalp-locks and dyed horsehair.

In form and feature these Indians seemed cast in one mould, and had a wild and game appearance that told of a lordly spirit unsubdued, and the consciousness of superiority to the smaller tribes, who might be said to exist only by their sufferance, and to the "poor whites," to whom they traded those robes and peltries which they could neither "eat nor wear," and would otherwise throw away. Each one wore a white blanket, and was completely armed

with bow and arrows, fusee, tomahawk, and scalping-knife; many also had lances in addition. The war-eagle feathers in their heads danced and fluttered in the wind, and the hawk-bells and dried antelope-hoofs, with which their shirts and leggings were lavishly hung, tinkled and rattled with every motion as they stalked proudly about, literally monarchs of all they surveyed.

Several wore the curiously striped and woven blankets of the Navajoes, obtained most probably in some freebooting excursion against the tribes south of the Platte.

Our usual Gros Ventre levee was but slimly attended, the elegant and dashing strangers being the centres of attraction. The cook was able to perform his regular duties without having the kitchen-windows darkened by the women curiously peering in, or the apartment invaded (if by chance the door was left open) by a crowd of impudent idlers, who, in defiance of all the rules and regulations of the post, encamped around the fireplace until ordered out by the interpreter.

Late in the afternoon we called the Sioux to a "feast," and as it was politic to keep them in good-humor, in order to obtain as much of their trade as possible, McBride determined that the repast should be a substantial one. When they were all seated around the room, the cook set before the chief a

large kettle of coffee, hard bread, and pans of corn and meat. A present was also added, consisting of blue and scarlet cloth, and a mirror and knife for each one. These liberal gifts caused the liveliest satisfaction, which they expressed by emphatically grunting "How!" The pipe was lit and passed around, and a brisk conversation followed.

Running-Antelope (the partisan) said the Sioux camp was on the forks of Knife River, about two days' travel from the post, and numbered over a thousand lodges. There were some Minne-con-gews and Yanc-toh-wahs with them. He also reported the buffalo very plenty, and added, "It is terrible how fat they are!"

Our improvements in building excited their surprise and admiration, and the Crow's-Feather thus figuratively expressed himself: "These whites used to dwell in a dirty brown lodge, full of holes," (the old fort,) "but now they have a fine, large white one."

They had noticed the comet, and were greatly concerned thereat, believing it to be a forerunner of wars and troubles.

This party disclaimed all knowledge of the nine Sioux who had been recently killed by the Gros Ventres. The supposition was that they must have belonged either to the Two-Bears or Big-Head's bands, now camped somewhere on the Moreau.

After the feast was ended, the majority of our

guests returned to the village, but several of the principal men remained with us all night. The third day after their arrival the Sioux left for their camp, making the most extravagant promises as to how they would act in the coming trade.

Two or three of our regular visitors commenced grumbling and finding fault, alleging that we "looked at the Sioux" (*i. e.* paid them unusual attention) more than at the Gros Ventres. A jealous feeling was evidently springing up, when the old Raising-Heart struck a blow upon the floor with his tomahawk to arrest attention, and declared "that the whites acted perfectly right in treating the Sioux well; that they came only once, or at most, twice a year to see them, whereas the Gros Ventres were with them all the time, and begged and received presents far greater in the aggregate than the Sioux ever had." This matter-of-fact statement, made the more impressive by the emphatic flourish of the tomahawk, speedily brought the grumblers to their senses, and they tacitly admitted the force and justice of his reasoning.

The day following the departure of the Sioux was cold and stormy, with occasional spits of snow. The Indians assembled in council, and determined to move into winter-quarters as soon as the Sioux should come in and make their trade.

The squaws were making and repairing skin

lodges, which, when completed, they pitched on the prairie to see if everything was in order. The surplus corn had been *câchéd*, and the scarcity of buffalo around the summer village began to be severely felt. Had it not been for their crops the Indians would have been reduced to extreme hunger, and the supply of meat so opportunely brought from the Assinniboine camp was in great demand. All that could be spared was traded for robes to the starving Indians.

Summer was past. The autumn, with all its gorgeous splendor, had come. The grass on the prairie was bleached and withered; and the leaves of the tall cottonwood trees and the red willows on the sand-bar were day by day more brilliant and beautiful in their dying glories.

Travelling on the plains at this season is delightful; the creeks and streams are low, the air clear and balmy, and the wild animals in prime condition for hunting.

In a little while how changed will be the face of nature! Snow will lie heavily on forest and prairie, on hill and valley; the once impetuous river will then slumber calmly in its icy bed, and the fierce northern blasts, sweeping across the naked plain, will drive the bands of buffalo to seek the shelter of the timbered bottoms.

CHAPTER XIV.

FIRST SNOW — POOR LIVING — TRADING PARTY OF SIOUX — BILLIARDS — DEATH OF THE FOUR-BEARS' SQUAW — PREPARATIONS FOR THE SIOUX TRADE — BUILDING HOUSES — CONFLICTING RUMORS — FINAL DEPARTURE OF THE SIOUX — REST

THE first snow of the season! October seventh dawned clear and cold, showing the ground covered with snow to the depth of three or four inches, but it soon disappeared under the influence of the noonday sun.

About eight Gros Ventres mustered up sufficient courage to go hunting; they returned well laden with meat, and reported the buffalo plenty and close, moving in toward the river. Encouraged by this news, a large party went out the next day, but came back during the evening in great trepidation, frightened by a herd. They had discovered plenty of buffalo moving very rapidly towards them, and without any further evidence concluded that there were enemies about, and beat a hasty retreat. Buffalo, as a general rule, never "raise" unless dis-

turbed by man, but at this season they are usually very wild. The Indians say they smell the approaching storms of winter, and the slightest taint in the air alarms them. The hunters might, therefore, have invoked the aid of a little common sense before hurrying back in terror.

Mahto-ta-ton-ka, the Bull-Bear, came in reporting an abundance of antelope close to the hills, about five miles off, and said he was going out to hunt them. This is considered an unfailing sign of the proximity of buffalo.

Just at dusk an Aricara Indian arrived from his village, and said that he had seen five large bands of cows on the opposite side of the river, probably driven this way by the Sioux hunters.

October passed slowly; the Sioux were daily looked for, and our Indians did little or nothing, being unwilling to hunt until settled in their winter-quarters. The deer were now in fine condition, and the fat haunches of venison that sometimes graced our board furnished a most acceptable change from the dried buffalo-meat, some of which, having been accidentally exposed to wet, and not thoroughly dried afterwards, began to smell much stronger than was agreeable. Some pieces, indeed, became so full of animal life that it seemed almost impossible to keep them quiet on the mess-table. The share which

fell to the lot of our Canadian voyageurs excited their loudly expressed disgust. They were under the impression, when they engaged with the Fur Company, that they were going to a land flowing with milk and honey, where, among other luxuries, they hoped one day to possess "a lodge in some vast wilderness." But to be regaled on maggoty dried meat, they considered beyond human endurance. Accordingly, one of their number, who had been a tailor somewhere, was constituted a committee to remonstrate with the Bourgeois. The latter gave the "committee" such a stunning reply that, on its report to the "constituents," they wisely concluded to endure what they could not help. At all events, we heard no more complaints, and as we were subsisting on the same fare ourselves, there was no reason for them.

An Indian arrived from the Sioux, and said they would be here in "five camps;" seven or eight days. Pierre Garreau, the well-known interpreter, came up from Fort Clark, to assist in the coming trade at Fort Berthold, and to accompany the Gros Ventres to their winter-quarters. Of this noted character I will speak at greater length hereafter.

Horse-racing continued to be the principal amusement of the Indians in the afternoons; while the favorite game appeared to be one which we called

Billiards, and a space outside the pickets of the village was beaten as smooth and hard as a floor by those who engaged in it. This game is played by couples; the implements are a round stone and two sticks seven or eight feet long, with bunches of feathers tied on at regular intervals. The players start together, each carrying his pole in a horizontal position, and run along until the one who has the stone, throws it, giving it a rolling motion, when each, watching his chance, throws his stick. The one who comes nearest (which is determined by the marks on the stick) has the stone for the next throw. Horses, blankets, robes, guns, &c., are staked at this game, and I have frequently seen Indians play until they had lost everything.

The Pipe was a most inveterate player and usually an unlucky one. His oldest squaw, a sour-looking Mandan woman, entirely disapproved of this mode of spending time, and would berate him so soundly that he was glad to go with her for the sake of peace, following meekly to the lodge where they stayed, for the poor wretch had none of his own. These exhibitions of conjugal discipline were always very amusing, and greatly enjoyed by his fellow-gamblers.

Four-Bears came into my house one evening with his robe closely wrapped around him, and contrary to his usual custom, said not a word, but remained

in an attitude of profound reflection. After a time he spoke: "My heart is in the ground; my youngest wife is very sick; her life is very small; the breath has nearly left her nostrils." Upon being further questioned, he said his squaw was far advanced in pregnancy, and had complained of feeling unwell. Several old women undertook to treat her, which they did by kneading and punching her in the stomach (a favorite and universal remedy) until, as might have been expected, she was in a very critical condition.

Early the next morning the Raising-Heart knocked at the gates before they were opened, to inform us that the squaw was dead, and that he wanted a scarlet blanket for her winding-sheet.

There was the usual wailing and gashing of flesh around the grave, by her relations, and the Four-Bears did not come for his regular cup of coffee. After the burial, old Doctor E-ten-ah-pen-ah dropped in, and said he was called in too late to save her, although there were several other "physicians" in attendance. His course of treatment was certainly original; he wrapped her head in a blanket, and burned a piece of dried buffalo dung in her face, uttering meanwhile an incantation. She died, however, in spite of all, but of course the Doctor was not to blame.

Several fresh arrivals from the Sioux, bringing word that they had moved, and would be in for trade in two more camps. As there was now a certainty of their coming, the men were sent across the river to construct a temporary trading-house. An outfit of goods was prepared that everything might be in readiness at a moment's notice.

The rival company also erected a post adjoining ours, and both parties were constantly on the alert, that they might not lose, even for an instant, any supposed advantage. The excitement among the whites communicated itself to the Indians, and countless rumors were in circulation, respecting the treachery of the Sioux, and apprehensions of a collision with them.

Riding out just before dark, I passed near the newly-made grave of the Four-Bears' favorite squaw. Standing by it, and crying in the most heart-rending tones, was the oldest wife. She was almost nude, having cut her garments to pieces, to testify to the intensity of her grief. Her hair was hacked off short, all over her head, and there was scarcely a spot on her arms and legs that was not gashed and bleeding from numerous self-inflicted wounds, made with a blunted butcher-knife which she held in her hand. Even her forehead was not spared, and altogether she presented a sickening appearance.

It is by no means uncommon in cases of violent grief, to sacrifice one, or even more fingers. The Four-Bears made his appearance for the first time in the evening. He too had cut short his long and valued hair, and looked much altered in consequence. Just before she died, he told his squaw that his heart would be buried in the ground with her, and that when he was an old man, and followed her to the Spirit-land, he would have her again for his wife and their happiness would be eternal.

In the middle of the month a cold, driving snow-storm set in, and lasted all day. The horses left the open prairie, and huddled together in groups in sheltered places. At times the storm was so violent that we could not see the dead people on their scaffolds, only two hundred yards from the gates. Out-door work was suspended, the men toasted themselves by huge fires, and whiled away the time with song and story.

In spite of the storm, a Mandan came from the Sioux camp, and confirmed the report of their being in shortly. He also said another party of visitors might be expected the next day.

There was nearly a foot of snow on the ground when the storm abated. The old mountaineers considered it one of the most severe within their recollection at this season of the year, and the In-

dians said that if the Sioux did not speedily come, they would delay no longer going into winter-quarters.

Immense flocks of wild geese passed south all day, flying very low, and offering excellent shots. By sundown a number of small moving objects were distinctly seen on the whitened plain, coming rapidly towards us; it was the expected party from the Sioux camp

They did not reach the sand-bar till after dark, and while waiting to be ferried over, kindled blazing fires; which, with the groups of horses and riders, had a most picturesque effect, heightened by the surrounding snow-clad wilderness.

Many Gros Ventres returned with this party, and were loud in their praises of the hospitality of the Sioux. The weather moderated; the air became clear and balmy, and the snow melted rapidly away.

The sun shone with dazzling brilliancy, and the reflection from the snow was extremely painful to the eyes. For several hours we were busy crossing over goods, and a party of men was detailed to remain with them as guard. The Poor Wolf and Crow's Breast had a long talk with McBride, strongly urging him to extreme caution in his dealings with the Sioux, as they were apprehensive of treachery. They advised him to choose three or four of the

most influential men for "soldiers," adding that the whites and Gros Ventres would make common cause in event of any difficulty arising, as their interests were identical—self-preservation.

A spell of pleasant weather succeeded, and the camps had not appeared, although every day brought fresh arrivals and fresh reports. At last the Running Antelope returned, saying that the Sioux were all coming in. The purpose of his visit was to confer with the Traders about prices, with the object of having them raised. And if their demands were not complied with, threats were freely hinted at, which the rascals were able and willing to execute.

One night, after all of us were wrapped in slumber, Four-Bears came over from his lodge in hot haste, and said he was afraid to sleep there any more, for he had heard the sound of footsteps softly treading outside, and directly, something was thrown at him, as he lay. Both of his women ran off immediately, but he declared he was so badly frightened that he could not stir for some time, and he was sure that it must have been the ghost of his dead squaw, come from her grave to trouble him, because he had not buried her as deep as he had promised.

Day after day passed, and every one was cursing Indian dilatoriness, and wishing the trade over. A

few Sioux came from the camp and said, that to-morrow, beyond doubt, they would be here. Several slept in our house, and the mice (of which there were plenty) troubled them so much by running over them, that they got up, lit their pipes and declared they could not sleep, because the mice were "Great Spirits."

The next morning, bright and early, we were astir, and making all necessary preparations to conduct the trade. The Indians were in a great state of excitement, and very busy, getting everything in readiness to receive their guests with all honor.

A large flotilla of bull-boats was soon in active service, and Traders and Indians entered heartily into the business of the day. The sun was high in the heavens, when a long dark line came in sight on the southern prairies; at first faint, but gradually becoming more distinct, until hidden from view by the forest, whence emerged a living stream upon the sand-bar. McBride had crossed over with his men early in the morning, and as soon as the Sioux appeared, I dispatched the Interpreter Malnouri to join him, and remained in the fort with only two men. Not an Indian was to be seen hanging around the kitchen-door; all were engrossed with the preparations and attentions which they designed for their Sioux guests.

As evening approached, matters assumed a very lively aspect on the sand-bar. Numerous camp-fires had been kindled, which threw into strong relief the groups of gayly dressed and bedizened Indians gathered around them. Huge fires were also made on the bank below the pickets of the village, illuminating the dark river, covered with bull-boats passing and repassing, as well as the crowds assembled at the landing-place. The gates of the fort were closed at the usual hour, and for an interval there were no interruptions of any kind.

A heavy knock at the gate, and a voice calling out, "Coula! coula!" (my friend) attracted my attention. After a short parley to ascertain who it was, I unbarred the gates to admit the Tobacco (Mandan) and two of his Sioux friends.

I received them in the usual manner, giving them the pipe to smoke, and a bowl of black medicine (coffee) and hard bread. One of the strangers was called "He-who-uses-his-heart-for-all," and had been appointed chief of the Onc-pa-pas, under the Bear's-Rib, by General Harney, at a treaty held with the Sioux near Fort Pierre in 1856. He showed me his certificate of the same, dated March 4th, which he carefully treasured in a leathern pouch wrapped in a piece of calico. He also had letters of recommendation from Mr. Charles Primeau and several other

well-known Sioux traders, testifying that "the bearer was a good young man, and a devoted friend to the whites." The usual result of giving a well-disposed Indian letters of this kind, is to make him an inveterate beggar, until his friendship is regulated by the amount of presents he receives.

His companion claimed to be a comrade and intimate friend of Paquenaude, seeming to expect great attention on that account. After sitting and talking a while they took their leave, saying that they would return early in the morning to trade some robes.

Paquenaude's friend, however, changed his mind as he was going out of the gate, and declared his intention of sleeping in the fort. He followed me closely when I made my tour of inspection to see that all was right, and finally wanted me to send him across the river again. I got rid of him at last by telling him to go to the bank and call for a bull-boat; then closing the gates I went to sleep, leaving him to pound for admission, and yell "Coula" until he was tired.

By early dawn a number of Indians who had finished their trading, came over to visit us, peering around and sharply scrutinizing everything. The Bourgeois, leaving Paquenaude in charge of the business on the other side, recrossed to finish the trade at the fort, chiefly for such articles as had not

been taken over. McBride reported that the Sioux had conducted themselves very quietly, despite their threatening talk, and that at least two-thirds went down to the Ree Village, where the bulk of their furs would be disposed of. The Gros Ventres exchanged corn for dry meat, and were now well supplied for some time to come.

I noticed a great many handsome women among the Sioux. As they have not such laborious work to perform as the Minnetaree squaws, they retain what beauty they possess much longer, and are generally tall and straight, without the thick ankles, the ungainly walk, and the stooping shoulders of their less favored sisters. Taking them altogether, men and women, the wild, prairie Sioux have no superiors among the Indians in appearance and domestic virtues.

In the afternoon they commenced moving camp, intending to join the rest of their band, at the Ree Village. Soon the long, black line, stretching away over the prairie, grew more and more indistinct, until it finally vanished in the distance.

The robes and peltries were quickly ferried over, and stored carefully away; and closing the gates, all gladly rested from the fatigue and excitement of the past two days, and the perplexities and uncertainties of the preceding three weeks.

CHAPTER XV.

INDIAN SUMMER — GOING TO WINTER-QUARTERS — MAGNIFICENT SCENERY — THE CAMP MOVING — INCIDENTS ON THE WAY — A FAT EQUESTRIAN — A JOVIAL PARTY.

IT was now the end of October, and the glorious balmy Indian summer had set in. The Gros Ventres were preparing to start for winter-quarters in a day or two, and were consequently in a world of bustle. The entire morning, a crowd of squaws surrounded the grindstone, waiting their turns to sharpen their axes. The store also was thronged by those who were supplying themselves with necessaries for the winter hunt; and by as many more trying to beg, or obtain on credit, such articles as they needed. A few of known probity were trusted with goods to the value of several robes; while others of doubtful standing were obliged to deposit dresses, ornaments, and bonnets of eagle-feathers as security. Thus, between the rival Trading-Posts, nearly every Indian was able to supply himself with an outfit. The men were employed in cleaning up

the fort, while we prepared an outfit for the trade at the winter camp.

The next day was a busy one indeed; the Indians were preparing to move away, and abandon their village to its winter solitude. Many deposited their valuables in our store for safe-keeping; and we soon had a motley array of medicine-bags, drums, rattles, lances, saddles, and other articles, useful and ornamental. Dashing young bucks, decked out in all their finery, and painted in the most fashionable style, pranced about on their gayly caparisoned steeds, whose tinkling equipments could be heard in every direction; while upon the squaws devolved the task of saddling and packing the horses with their household effects.

As each family was ready, its head led the way, followed by a train of pack and riding horses, *travées*, dogs, women and children. Thus, almost insensibly as it were, the village was deserted. As the last stragglers were departing, the Long-Hair ascended the roof of his lodge, dressed in his "chief's coat" of scarlet cloth, trimmed with gold and silver lace, and harangued his indignation at their going so far to winter-quarters, and leaving such a dangerous strip of country to be traversed if any of them should have occasion to visit the village and the forts. The Poor Wolf, the leader of the

"soldier band," mounted upon his splendid black horse, remained behind to urge on the loiterers, so that before nightfall the village was entirely depopulated, and a feeling of loneliness overshadowed us all. Several families of Sioux had remained behind when their camp moved, intending to winter with the Gros Ventres.

In the morning we started to overtake the camp and accompany it to winter-quarters. Our party consisted of myself, an interpreter and his family, four men, and two wagons loaded with goods. We intended remaining with the Gros Ventres to trade through the season.

The day was beautiful, and the air soft as in spring; the prairie was dry, the creeks low, and travelling was in consequence delightful. After a short delay while passing through the timber, caused by the tongue of one of the wagons breaking, we overtook the teams of the American Fur Company, in charge of Pierre Garreau, and travelled on together in the most friendly manner.

The Indians had made their first camp at the lake about five miles from the village; the ashes of their fires were still smouldering, and many little temporary huts of willow-boughs standing. A short distance further on, an Indian pony with a broken leg was lying by the trail, having been abandoned with

a strange kind of humanity — without being killed to put it out of misery.

The poor animal raised its head and whinnied as we passed; but we could afford it no relief, and to kill it would only be made a pretext for its owner to extort from us its full value. We were therefore compelled to leave it to its dreadful fate, which was easily foretold from the numbers of sneaking wolves that hovered around, just beyond gunshot.

Our course on the high prairie was parallel with the river, though sometimes several miles from it, but always in full view of its wonderful scenery and tortuous windings.

On one side the prairie stretched away, until it seemed to join the blue sky in the distance. On the other, were bold and precipitous bluffs of different-colored clay, interspersed with grass-covered hills sloping down to the edge of the forest, which, no longer clad in the gorgeous hues of autumn, looked dark and sombre.

Beyond coursed the mighty Missouri; all the wild, rushing impetuosity of the early summer gone, and flowing slowly and silently, as if its bosom was already chilled by the cold embrace of winter. Further on, across the river, was another dark line of forest, from which lofty cliffs of fantastic shapes seemed to rise; and beyond these again, others

loftier still, reared their sharply defined crests to the sky.

Before us extended a vast plain whose extreme boundary the eye could not reach. Behind us, the black hills which encircled the bend of the river below the village, apparently almost within reach, though in reality miles away; from the tops of which the boundless prairie again unrolled itself. A thin smoke, barely visible to a practised eye, floated on the air; the Indians said it arose from the Sioux camp on Knife River.

The sun was already declining when we came in sight of the Indian camp, picturesquely located in a wooded ravine of the Mauvaises Terres, about a mile from the Missouri. A small creek, which after many windings emptied into the lake we had crossed in the morning, afforded a supply of water for the encampment.

Our cattle were unyoked, and our horses unsaddled, and driven down to drink; and then allowed to graze at will; a fire was kindled, and our dinner (and supper) of dry meat, coffee, and hard bread soon in course of preparation. Before it was ready, I was called by the Bear-in-the-water (Mandan) to a "feast" in his lodge, which consisted solely of some very fine, fat dried meat.

After doing justice to it, I returned with my

entertainer to our camp-fire, and dispatched a second meal.

The young hunters were ranging over the hills and through the ravines in search of game or traces of enemies.

A group of the principal men stood upon a high black hill which overshadowed the camp, forming a conspicuous landmark for miles around, and discussed their future movements. The red light of the declining sun shone upon the white conical lodges that dotted the prairie, and with all the accessories to the scene, made a wild and strikingly beautiful picture.

Darkness coming on, the horses were driven up and picketed in front of the lodges, and our cattle securely tied to the wheels of the wagons. The noise of a drum in a distant lodge was soon the only sound that broke the stillness of the night. Having picketed my horse close by, I wrapped myself in my robe, with my saddle for a pillow, and fell asleep, to be repeatedly wakened by the starved Indian dogs tugging and gnawing at my covering.

The morning broke cold and raw; the sharp, biting wind drove the horses to the dells for shelter as soon as they were released from their pickets. The squaws bustled about, shouting at the dogs and scolding the children, as they gathered fuel for

cooking. For a long time everything was quiet; the smoke curled from the lodges, and no sign of preparation for departure was visible. When the hour for starting had come, the soldiers rode round the camp and harangued, "Pull down your lodges, and pack your horses!" In a moment the lodges, which had been tightly stretched over the poles, fluttered in the wind; a moment more, and they were flat on the prairie, and the squaws busy packing and loading their horses, which had been driven up in readiness by the boys. We also harnessed our teams, but durst not stir until the camp was ready and the word given. After saddling my horse, I could not help admiring the celerity and skill with which the squaws packed their "plunder," keeping up meanwhile a clattering accompaniment with their tongues.

Not twenty steps from where I stood was pitched the lodge of the old Mandan "Buck-Eagle," before spoken of in connection with the Bull-Medicine. He was very aged and feeble, and could barely keep pace with the camp on the march; and had we been constantly travelling like the Sioux, he must inevitably have been left behind and abandoned to his fate. The women of his lodge hustled the old fellow out of the way *sans cérémonie*, and began packing their horses.

The Buck-Eagle took himself off a few paces, just far enough to be out of danger of being struck by a lodge-pole, and sitting down on his robe, deliberately proceeded to divest himself of his shirt and leggings, and appeared, without any unusual exertion, to make a very hearty (though not very substantial) meal upon the parasites that so thickly infested the seams of his garments. Leaving him to the enjoyment of his epicurean feast, I rode to the "black hill," whence I had a splendid bird's-eye view of the whole camp.

When the head of the column moved, I rejoined the wagons; and directly, Red-Tail, one of the soldiers, galloped up, shouting, "Nar-har-ah," (Go on.) We quickly fell in with the grand cavalcade of warriors, mounted and on foot; horses drawing loaded *travées*, upon which were sometimes tied two or three children, and as many puppies, clinging together with the most ludicrous tenacity.

Dogs also dragged their full share upon miniature *travées*, occasionally joining in a grand skirmish with their unemployed companions, usually resulting in the complete rout of the latter.

Indian dogs, like their wolfish progenitors, are exceedingly cowardly, all bark and none bite; but the moment one is harnessed to his *travée*, conscious of the protection it affords him, he becomes very quar-

relsome, and when a number get together they make "the hair fly" to some purpose.

The young colts and favorite "buffalo" horses ran at will, careering gayly over the plain and dashing through the crowds, frequently starting some well-behaved pack-horse to indulge in eccentricities until his load was disarranged, and required readjustment; the enraged women on whom the task devolved bestowing left-handed blessings on everything within earshot. Some of the young men played their game of billiards as the camp moved, and every one seemed to enjoy immensely the change from the staid life at the summer village.

The soldiers rode about, hurrying up the stragglers and checking the head of the column when it moved on too fast. Thus we travelled, a compact body in three parallel lines.

I pressed to the head, and joined the old Raising-Heart and his family and relatives; and as they were all supplied with fancy spotted horses, the clan made a gallant appearance.

The old gentleman wore a felt hat, a gift from some of his white friends, and was urging on, by repeated applications of his whip, a very diminutive donkey, whose pack seemed nearly as large as itself. With every stroke of the whip the old man looked at me and smiled; flourishing meanwhile a fan of

eagle-feathers. Attached to his party was Ara-poo-shee, the Rotten-Bear, whose immense frame bestrode a little sorrel pony, that fairly staggered under its unwieldy load. The Rotten-Bear seldom ventured upon equestrian exercises, having a wholesome dread of a fall, and never travelled faster than a walk. He was obliged to give his undivided attention to preserving his equilibrium, and heeded not the many sharp jokes that were flung at him without mercy, as at every slight stumble made by his little horse, his countenance involuntarily assumed an air of the greatest solicitude and apprehension, ludicrous in the extreme.

Our course lay along the edge of the prairie overlooking the Mauvaises Terres. We were elevated many hundred feet above the wooded bottom of the river; huge bluffs of clay, of every color (bright red predominating), and of every conceivable shape, reared their lofty turreted summits, suggesting the resemblance to ruins of colossal proportions. Upon these bluffs, and over acres of red clayey soil, not a blade of grass met the eye, their barren and desolate character well deserving the distinctive title of "bad lands."

The river made a sharp turn to the southwest, and the vista of rugged bluffs appeared interminable; dome after dome, and turret after turret rising up

against the cold gray sky, presenting a scene of desolate grandeur beyond all powers of description.

We had journeyed on in this manner for some time, when, leaving the high prairie, the motley crowd under the guidance of the Poor-Wolf, passed quickly down into a well-wooded ravine, and halting, prepared to encamp.

We did the same, being compelled, however, from the nature of the ground, to make a detour, in order to facilitate the descent of our teams. The high bluffs were a great protection against the cold winds, and we made a very comfortable camp. The hunters were soon roaming over the hills, and several fat deer were not long in finding their way to the lodges. A large band of elk was raised, but they were off in a twinkling; their magnificent forms being in full view, as they rapidly dashed over the brow of a hill and were lost to sight. We built a huge blazing fire, and a number of our Indian friends helped to complete the jovial circle that gathered round it.

CHAPTER XVI.

PIERRE GARREAU — L'EAU-QUI-MONT — BUILDING WINTER HOUSES — RETURN TO THE FORT.

NOVEMBER set in raw, cloudy, and cold, presenting a very great contrast to the delightful Indian summer we had just enjoyed. The soldiers having given us permission to travel on, independently of the movements of the camp, we made an early start, intending to reach the proposed wintering-place, near the mouth of Rising Water, by sundown.

Pierre Garreau and myself rode ahead some distance, in hopes of seeing a stray bull and giving chase. While jogging along, Pierre entertained me with many anecdotes of his early life, and the exciting scenes in which he had been a conspicuous actor. Pierre generally claims to be a half-breed, but such is not the case: he is a full-blood Aricara Indian, and has passed his entire life in the service of the American Fur Company, as interpreter. His mother being a very handsome squaw, was married shortly after her Indian husband died to a trader

named Garreau, who adopted as his own, the child to whom she soon gave birth, and afforded him every possible advantage. When a lad, he sent him to St. Louis, and had him apprenticed to one Page, a baker and confectioner, with whom he lived, as he expresses it, "four years in the brick houses," and thoroughly learned his business.

But that fondness for wild life which can never be overcome by those who have once tasted of its pleasures, impelled him to return to the Indian country, where he has since steadily resided. He was now over sixty years of age, and his great pride was in his horses, of which he had some very fine ones.

Pierre had three sons by different wives, all quiet, well-behaved young men, who, from having lived so much with the whites, were free from many objectionable Indian habits. He himself was very neat and particular in his person, and his clothes, guns, and equipments were always in perfect order.

We reached the crossing of Rising Water at noon, when, leaving the wagons to follow, the Hawk and myself, with Pierre's three sons, rode rapidly over the hills, and finally came to a heavily timbered point about four miles above the creek, sheltered by high bluffs, and affording secure and excellent pasturage. The Hawk made a cautious survey before entering the timber, and carefully examined the trail

for any suspicious "sign." After threading a bridle-path for some distance, we came to a cleared space, where the Indians had once wintered, and found several cabins still standing, in a tolerable state of repair.

We took possession of one, and tying our horses to the trees, kindled a fire and roasted a piece of venison that the Hawk had luckily brought with him, watching its progress with infinite satisfaction and keen appetites. When it was done, we drew our butcher-knives, and using a piece of bark for a platter, attacked it; nor rested, until it was completely demolished.

It was one of the sweetest morsels I ever tasted, seasoned as it was with that best of all sauces, hunger.

The cries of the teamsters now heralded the approach of the wagons, which had been delayed by the heavy growth of underbrush, through which it was necessary to clear a road before a passage could be made for them.

After unloading and storing away the goods, the oxen were turned loose, and we betook ourselves to our robes and blankets and slept soundly.

Toward noon of the next day, the Indians arrived, and all was then bustle and animation. As soon as the lodges were pitched, the squaws began chopping

down trees, and the deep silence of the forest was rudely dissipated by the clattering of hundreds of axes.

A child of the Red-Tail died, and the body was placed in a tree on the edge of the forest by the sorrowing parents.

The squaws worked diligently, and lodge after lodge filled the gaps left by the destruction of trees.

Some of the hunters went out to reconnoitre, and reported buffalo plenty, moving in towards camp; and a general surround was talked of in a day or so.

One bright morning I shouldered my rifle, and set out for a stroll among the surrounding hills, to enjoy, if possible, the view from the top of one of the highest.

My course lay through a low prairie bottom that nestled between the timber and the bluffs; upon the sides of the latter the Indian horses were grazing, well secured against danger by the vigilant scouts posted on all the prominent hills, completely commanding the possible approach of an enemy. I spent nearly half a day very pleasantly climbing among the rugged clay bluffs, and with the aid of my spy-glass saw distinctly, at a great distance, bands of buffalo quietly feeding. One very steep bluff, towering high above all the rest, attracted my attention, and after a tough scramble, I gained the top.

A glorious view rewarded me. At my feet lay the timbered point in which the Indians were building their winter encampment; the sharp strokes of the axe, softened by distance, saluted my ears, and occasionally a crashing and swaying among the trees, told that one more had fallen.

Around me rose clay bluffs of every size and shape: some were black and gloomy, as if a fire had swept over them; but the majority were tinted with a vermilion hue, vividly bright under the glancing rays of the sun. The Missouri swept the base of a range of cliffs even more picturesque, which towered on the opposite side. These receded gradually from the river in a graceful sweep, and returned again a few miles higher up, holding as it were, in their embrace, a most beautiful little prairie, upon which the Indians cast longing looks, wishing the river frozen over, that they might cross their horses, and pasture them on its rich grass.

A mile or so further on, a dark line of timber showed where Shell Creek emptied into the Missouri. Here was the beginning or foot of the Grand Detour, and as it wound its tortuous way through the Mauvaises Terres, the Great Bend could be distinctly traced until it was lost in the faint blue line that marked the hills of Knife River.

I could have enjoyed the view for hours, but the

sun was getting low, and a sharpened appetite admonished me that it was time to return. On my way I shot at a wolf that was loping along in an easy, impudent manner, and disturbed his peace of mind very materially.

Our houses or cabins, for they were nothing more, were well advanced; the rails laid, and rushes and dirt thrown on to finish the roofs. A chimney remained yet to be built of sticks and mud, and two days of hard work would complete everything.

But we had reckoned without our host. The sticks forming the framework of the chimney were tied across at regular intervals to the four upright poles with thongs or cords of raw hide, and the end of one happened to project from the mixture of mud and grass that composed the walls of the chimney. This attracted the notice of some starving dogs, who, while we were all asleep in the adjoining cabin, tore the whole structure to pieces, and devoured the cords, leaving us to do our work over again. After this warning, a door was made to prevent any similar catastrophe.

Our men, not daring to vent their anger on the dogs for fear of the squaws' interference, contented themselves with uttering unlimited "*sacr-r-r-és chiens!*" and, as if on purpose to increase their already unbounded disgust at everything Indian, the

old Buck-Eagle came into the house just as they were ready to eat their suppers, and, without even saying "by your leave," picked up the coffee-pot and drank off its contents from the spout with the utmost *sang froid.* After draining it to the grounds, he pronounced it "suck-itts," (good,) and took his departure, leaving the "moshees" (whites) to reflect upon the uncertainty of all human expectations.

The Indians built their village in three camps, about a quarter of a mile apart. Most of them had small log cabins close together, opening into a large round dirt-covered lodge, which was used in common as a stable for their horses. The majority of the Indians had finished their houses at the same time as ourselves, and the numerous well-beaten paths leading in all directions through the timber gave the place the appearance of having been long inhabited.

I had now seen all things completed, and on the ninth day after our arrival started with the men and teams on my return, to bring back from the fort the remainder of the goods for the winter trade.

At sundown we bivouacked on Rising Water; our fire was kindled, and before long a side of fat, juicy ribs of buffalo-meat was roasting before it. The coffee was speedily made, the ribs done to a turn, and we were soon in the full enjoyment of a prairie

supper. The sky was overcast, and the cold north winds swept fiercely over the open prairie. The oxen had been tied to the wheels of the wagons to prevent them from straying, and were thus partially sheltered; my horse came to the fire to share its warmth, and stood so near me, as I lay closely wrapped in my buffalo-robe, that my head sometimes rested against his fore feet, and the breath from his nostrils blew into my face as he slept and nodded over me.

The darkness grew more intense; then the Aurora flashed and faded in the northern sky until the prairies glowed as if on fire. Wolves howled around us in numbers all night long, and the sparks from our camp-fire, scattered by the wind, fell among the grass, (which at this season is as dry as tinder,) causing it to blaze so furiously that it required our utmost exertions to prevent a conflagration.

Mounting guard by turns, we passed the night. At daybreak we laid our course for the fort, distant about thirty miles, which, by hard pushing, we accomplished before evening.

CHAPTER XVII.

RETURN TO CAMP — A "POUDERIE" — LIFE IN THE WINTER CAMP — SEVERE TOIL OF THE SQUAWS — FIREWOOD — BILLIARDS — DANCES — COTTONWOOD BARK FOR HORSE-FEED.

WE were soon ready to return again to the winter camp. The wagons had been loaded, and all the necessary preparations made, when the weather became very cold, and a severe snowstorm set in. Not caring to unload again, after consulting with the Bourgeois, I determined upon starting, and was fortunately able to secure the services of a Gros Ventre Indian, popularly known among the traders by the *sobriquet* of "Bonaparte," as guide. He was a stanch friend of the white man and a warrior of tried prowess, and had also been a travelling companion in our expedition to the Assinniboine camp.

For several miles our route lay through the timber, which sheltered us in great measure from the weather. But after crossing the lake, and ascending the hills to the high open prairie, the storm struck us in all its fury; the snow fell thick and fast, and

already covered the ground to the depth of half a foot; while a driving north-east wind whirled it about and chilled us to the bone, in spite of our blanket capotes, leggings, capeshaws, and other wrappings.

The snow deepened so rapidly that the cattle toiled heavily along, and were badly stalled more than once in crossing a hollow of the prairie, where the drift had accumulated.

The storm was what is called in the mountains a "pouderie," and so blinding that it was impossible to see more than a few yards ahead at any time. Night overtook us as we reached the ridge; the wind had blown the snow away, and travelling was much easier in consequence. Our Indian guide led us to a sheltered place in the bad lands, where we encamped in a snug thicket of dry ash. The moment we gained the friendly refuge of the encircling hills, and were protected from the chilling blasts to which we had been exposed all day, a feeling of warmth and security took possession of us, and all gayly set about "making camp" without loss of time. Our oxen fared well on the huge bundles of hay we had brought with us, and after stripping my horse of his equipments, I led the noble animal to a cosy little dell, which was completely covered from the wind by the thickly interlaced and overhanging

branches of the trees. Having supplied him with abundance of hay, I turned to where Bonaparte was scraping away the snow with his feet, and collecting dry leaves and twigs to kindle a fire. The pile was soon kindled into a blaze, and crackling branches piled on, until we had a huge, roaring fire.

Water there was none; but melted snow supplied a substitute, and we were thus enabled to enjoy that great luxury on the prairies, a cup of coffee. Our moccasins were hung on little forked sticks to dry, after which we spread our robes and blankets, and slept soundly, undisturbed by the howling of the storm, or the serenade with which the wolves favored us. Bonaparte crept into a little hollow, by the roots of a tree, and made himself a very snug resting-place.

When we awoke, the morning air was chill and raw, the fire had burned down, and everything was heavily covered with snow. As each man rolled out from his lair, shaking the white clouds from his robes, it seemed as though every snow-covered hillock around us would suddenly start up, and reveal a wild, uncouth-looking human form, hurrying to stir up the embers, and rekindle the almost expiring flames. More fuel was piled on; the remainder of the hay fed to the animals, and our own breakfast soon prepared.

We regained the ridge with difficulty; and not until we had doubled the teams on each wagon, were we able to proceed on our way. A very large band of antelope was started by the creaking of the wheels, and their light airy forms flitted by us like shadows. We crossed the fresh trails of buffalo going in toward the river, probably driven by the storm; and discovered a small band at a short distance from our line of march. The close of the day brought us safely to the Indian camp.

The paths leading in all directions through the timber were beaten hard and smooth as a floor, by the constant tread of moccasined feet, and the passage of numerous dog-*travées* loaded with wood.

The lodges were finished, and the new-fallen snow lay pure and white on the rude cabins, making them look fresh and clean, and concealing from view aught that might offend the eye.

I found life in the winter camp very enjoyable; the constant stir and bustle, and the pleasures and excitements of the chase, causing time to pass by almost unheeded.

Early on still, cold mornings, at the hour when the lodge-fires were being rekindled, the thick white smoke would rise up in a heavy column, and float away lazily, with scarcely any motion, resembling, except in color, the smoke from the busy foundries

in the haunts of civilized man. The effect was striking, and visible for a great distance.

Before the sun was up, bands of horses were driven out to the most sheltered places among the hills, and the beautiful prairie across the river, which, admirably protected as it was from the winds, and abounding with rich grass, afforded the best winter pasturage for miles around. The whole face of the country was now well covered with snow, and when the sun's morning beams tinged with crimson the whitened hills and valleys, the frozen crystals sparkled and glistened with indescribable brilliancy.

While the hunters ranged over the hills in quest of game, or watching their horses, the squaws went off to cut fuel for the lodges, and peel cottonwood bark for the food of the horses at night. They commenced their preparations by belting their robes around them in such a manner, that, while affording a complete protection for their whole bodies, the free use of the arms was not interfered with.

Then harnessing up some eight or ten dogs to as many *travées*, they shouldered their axes and led the van, followed by the dogs trotting demurely along in single file. Before long, the woods resounded with the dull strokes of the axes, mingled constantly with the shrill voices of the women, scolding their

dogs, who, very naturally, liked to vary the dull routine of every-day life by getting up a little rough-and-tumble fight among themselves. When a dog had his full load, he was led to the main pathway, and after receiving a couple of practical reminders on his head from the axe-handle, to attend to his own business, started for his lodge, dragging his *travée* with great steadiness. Unless caught on some obstruction (in which case he patiently awaits his release), he quickly arrives at his destination, and finds some of the family ready to relieve him of his load and turn him loose to steal or fight among his brethren for his dinner. Several hours later, the squaws are seen coming back in parties, with a retinue of dogs, all loaded as heavily as possible.

Each woman carries on her back, supported by a band passed around the shoulders, a bundle of wood of such size and weight that two would make a fair load for an Indian pony. Yet the women think nothing of it, and travel along, talking and laughing, as if it was play. Every day, year in and year out, this must be done; and if the lodge is large, and the weather very cold, it is often necessary to make two, and sometimes three trips a day. A large camp will very soon consume all the small, dry wood in the vicinity, and the women are then compelled to go a long distance, often two miles before they can obtain the needed supply.

When they reach the lodges, the wood is thrown down and piled, the kettle put over the fire, and cooking goes on again. Then the cottonwood bark is to be thawed, and peeled in thin strips to feed the horses; moccasins have to be mended, and skins and robes dressed or handled. After a hunt, the labor is greatly increased, as the meat must be cut up and dried, and the fresh skins prepared for future dressing.

An Indian who has three or four wives, gets along very comfortably, for, provided the women do not quarrel too much, they divide the labor between them. The Bear-Hunter, in whose lodge I lived the whole of one winter, had five squaws; but as they were all sisters there was very little discord among them. His family lived well; they had abundance of horses, and could always command the services of a good hunter.

Each of these five women belonged to a different "band," or society; and as the lodge was one of the largest in the village, it was in great demand as a rendezvous. The band of Bulls, the White-Cows, the Goose band, and other associations frequently assembled, and made night hideous with their vocal and instrumental accompaniments, while tripping the "light fantastic toe," putting sleep entirely out of the question.

While the women patiently performed their daily drudgery, the men who were not guarding the horses, visited from lodge to lodge; feasting, smoking, and relating long anecdotes of war and hunting exploits. Sometimes they gambled, playing their favorite game of hand, in which they would get so excited that time passed unheeded, until the sharp voice of an old squaw, vexed and angry at the losses her husband was sustaining, berated him so severely that they were often glad to bring their sports to a close.

In order to enjoy their amusement of "billiards," some of its devotees cleared off a level piece of ground, between the two lower camps, and planted a line of bushes and underbrush, to form a partial barrier against the wind. Logs were placed on each side of the "alley," to keep the sticks (or cues) from glancing off.

By constant use the table was soon beaten and polished as smooth as ice, and the game was played with greater satisfaction and spirit than ever.

At any hour of the day, no matter how cold it was, or how keenly the wind blew, one might witness a couple of fellows, clothed only in their breech-cloths, industriously following up the smooth rolling stone with their sticks, and measuring and disputing the success of the throw with the most intense

eagerness. On the curbing the spectators sat, muffled in their shaggy robes, passing the indispensable pipe from one to another, and entering heartily into the spirit of the game, betting and losing with the same recklessness as the players.

The mania for gambling was by no means confined to the men. The women and young girls were equally imbued with it; and, sitting down on a smooth place on the ice, they would roll a pebble from one to the other for hours together. Young infants were often kept on the ice all the while, their mothers, or those who had them in charge, being too much engrossed with their play to pay them any attention.

When the sun had set, and while its departing rays grew fainter and dimmer, the sound of the horses' feet could be heard crunching the frozen snow-covered roads as they were driven home from pasture. While crossing the ice they drank from large holes cut for that purpose and constantly kept open. Cheerful fires were kindled in the lodges used for stables, and by their light the horses were carefully secured; the restive ones and young colts being separated from the others to prevent injury.

The women passed to and from the river, bringing water for domestic purposes, and the dogs invariably curled themselves up at the entrance to the lodge,

where, if one was not very careful, he could not avoid trampling on one or more, apparently sleeping. For a while all is quiet; cooking is going on in every lodge, and during that important operation no one likes to be absent. When the meal is finished, the bustle and stir begin again; the trader's house, the Exchange, where all the idlers congregate to hear the news, is then the great centre of attraction. Visits are exchanged from lodge to lodge, and the young bucks, dressed and painted, stroll about in parties, singing songs, or hover around the dwellings of their sweethearts, watching for them to answer the usual signal.

The sound of the drum, and the yells and cries of the dancers, proclaim what is going on in another part of the camp, and the dogs, as if by a preconcerted arrangement, join in a general wailing cry, which lasts for several minutes, and gradually dies away. Just as one begins to hope for a brief interval of quiet, some young puppy, anxious to try his voice, indulges in a whine; in an instant every dog is endeavoring to outdo his neighbor, who returns the compliment with untiring energy.

It is late at night before all is quiet; the bright sparks no longer fly thickly from the chimneys of the cabins, and every dweller in the camp is buried in slumber.

When the snow lies deep on the ground, and enemies are less numerous, (from the fear of being easily tracked,) most of the horses are left out at night, and only brought up when wanted for hunting. If the grass is plenty, and they can get a fair allowance of cottonwood bark, they may be kept in good order all winter; but if hard hunted, and brought up every night, by the time spring comes they are so reduced that only the very best horses can then "catch" buffalo.

Cottonwood bark is very nourishing, and if judiciously fed, a horse will fatten on it. A tree is cut down, the tender boughs lopped off, and after warming it to take out the frost, the bark is peeled and torn into strips of various lengths, resembling pine shavings; the knots and rough pieces are carefully thrown away, and it is then ready for use.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WOLF TRAPPING AT THE FORT — A NEW INVENTION — LUDICROUS INCIDENT — SPORTS IN WINTER — A "SELL" — HUNTING ADVENTURE — STARVATION AMONG THE SIOUX — ORIGIN OF THE FEUD BETWEEN THE GROS VENTRES AND SIOUX — ELK MEDICINE.

AFTER remaining several weeks in the camp, I went down to the fort for additional supplies. The men were in the height of the trapping season, and had met with good success. I was fortunate enough to be in time for the trial of a new style of trap which one of them had contrived. It seems, he thought that catching wolves in the old-fashioned steel trap was slow and uncertain; besides, from its bulk, a wolf of any sense would be sure to see it, and defeat the hopes of the trapper by declining to be caught.

The simplicity of the new invention was one of its chief recommendations. It consisted merely of a stout iron hook, fastened to a chain, and well baited with cracklings (leavings, after frying out buffalo tallow). It was then to be secured to a post

most cunningly set in the ground, and covered with snow. Success seemed beyond doubt; every one commended this ingenious arrangement, and predicted great results. It was set for the first time, on a raw and cloudy night, when the wind whistled and howled, and beat against the pickets with great fury. The other traps were set as usual; but no one cared to go to bed until the new one was proved. At midnight the men sallied forth to make a tour of inspection, more particularly to see the practical working of Monsieur Gingras' patent wolf-hook.

It was near the witching hour of twelve, when a feeble cry came from the direction in which this scientific masterpiece was planted; and picking up their guns and hastily unbarring the gates, the men rushed forth in breathless haste, Monsieur G. in advance, with a heavy club to dash out the brains of the luckless wolf. Sure enough, a small animal was impaled on the hook. "A coyote! a coyote!" was the cry, — and rushing on it with uplifted club, he dealt a blow that stretched it lifeless.

It was triumphantly carried to the fort, where the light of the fire in the men's quarters showed it to be an unfortunate little dog, which had been accidentally shut out in the evening.

But the trap was a success; no one could gainsay that; so, without heeding to any of the witticisms

his comrades indulged in at his expense, he persevered for nearly a week, catching nothing; while the old-fashioned trappers had their hands full, skinning wolves and foxes. McBride advised him to take his hook to the point above, and suspend it from the limb of a tree over a well-beaten deer-path, where, by using hay for bait, he might very probably succeed in catching a deer.

This advice coincided exactly with his views, and he fixed his trap in a splendid place, about a mile from the fort, visiting it regularly morning and evening for several days, always carrying hay for new bait.

The deer-tracks, he said, were very plenty, and very fresh, and how he failed to hook one was beyond his comprehension.

Finally he was induced to think that the first of April had been anticipated in his case, and abandoned in disgust his attempt to catch wolves or deer with a cat-fish hook!

Around the fort it was dull and lonely; for while it was certainly a relief to be free from Indian society, yet, when the village was inhabited, the constant stir going on served to break the monotony of the daily routine.

It was a favorite amusement, on a bright moonlight night, to watch, gun in hand, upon the roof of

one of the houses, in hopes of getting a shot at the wolves and foxes which were always prowling around. While thus keeping watch, one could not help contrasting the changed appearance of the village, since its desertion by the Indians.

The once cheerful fires have burned to ashes; the lodges are damp and chilly, and have an earthy, sepulchral smell. Tall medicine-poles, bearing offerings to the Great Spirit, rear their lofty tops like the spires and minarets of an Oriental city, while over all reigns a stillness, painful from its very intensity, broken perhaps by the melancholy wail of the wolves.

. . . . . .

No one about the Post took a keener delight in these nocturnal amusements than the cook. That worthy delighted to post himself, with his gun cocked and primed, to send a dose of lead into any wolf or fox that might be so foolhardy as to expose himself to the unerring aim of the accomplished "*maître de cuisine.*" The frozen carcasses of the wolves, the men had trapped, after being skinned, were thrown into a pile outside the fort, where they often attracted the attention of their living brethren.

The cook met with such success that he was induced to continue operations for several consecutive nights. McBride and myself were sitting be-

fore a blazing fire, awaiting the cooking of a side of fat buffalo ribs by his squaw, (as only an Indian woman knows how,) when the conversation turned on trapping, and finally led to speculations on our cook's performances, and suggested a practical joke at his expense. While McBride went to the kitchen, ostensibly to give some directions, and detain him, I slipped out of the gate and propped up a large white dog, that had been crippled, and killed in consequence, a short time before. In the uncertain moonlight he looked for all the world like a wolf prowling among the carcasses. Before long the cook cautiously reconnoitred from his lookout, and catching sight of the intruder, thrust his gun through the pickets as far as possible, and after a most careful and deliberate aim, fired.

To his unutterable horror, it moved not. He leaped back into the house, rolling his eyes wildly, and spluttering out exclamations and inquiries in such haste as to be totally unintelligible. The men, attracted by the report of the well-charged gun, rushed forth to see what he had shot, none more excited than "the man who had been fishing for wolves." "Look! look!" he exclaimed, "he is running off!" Bang! went the other barrel, and before the smoke cleared away, the gates were flung wide open, and a rush was made to bring back in triumph this new trophy of a sportsman's skill.

As they stood over the inanimate form, a few brief but powerful words were uttered. The cook, lifting up his fur cap, wiped away the sweat that was rolling down his face, and meekly returned, followed by a quiet and subdued party of men, to continue those slumbers which had been so rudely disturbed.

A day or so after this exploit several bulls made their appearance on the bluffs, not more than four or five miles off; and as cords were needed to tie up the packs of robes and peltries which had accumulated, it seemed a favorable opportunity to get one or more skins, and have them cut into cords by the squaws. A hunting-party was soon made up, headed by Jeff Smith, a veteran of over thirty years experience. He wore a close-fitting, white blanket skull-cap, coming low down over the forehead, beneath which peered the deep-set gray eyes and sharp countenance of the old "Kee-re-pe-tee-ah," or Big-Bull, as the Gros Ventres called him. A well-worn blanket capote, once white, but by exposure to the weather and the smoke of the lodges turned to a sickly yellow, with leggings and moccasins of elk-skin, completed his dress. An excellent rifle, in a plain skin cover, lay across the pommel of his saddle, and the handle of a long butcher-knife projected beyond the parfleche scabbard in his belt.

Antoine, another member of the party, was buried

in an enormous nondescript headgear made of a piece of buffalo-robe, and wore an elkskin hunting-shirt, trimmed around the edge with otter. He carried one of Sharp's carbines slung on his back, and rode a little mustang, which had a peculiar knowing twinkle in his eye, and kept his ears pricked up like a rabbit. We incontinently dubbed him "Rabbit," which name he retained until his death by drowning the following spring, while trying to cross a creek swollen by the melting snows from the mountains.

In high good-humor we kept on together, laughing at Antoine's wrath whenever his unfortunate Rosinante made a misstep, sometimes almost jerking him over his head.

Old Jeff volunteered the rather unnecessary information that he did n't intend to "run," but "kalkilated on approachin'," in which, be it said, he was generally very successful.

When as close to the bulls as we durst go without alarming them, we dismounted to tighten our girths, and see that the weapons were in readiness. Smith crawled some distance up the ravine and endeavored to approach near enough for a shot, but finding it impracticable, came back.

Remounting, we rode forward, to the great joy of our horses, who, with uplifted heads and tails, were impatiently pawing the snow. Crossing a ridge, we

came in sight of our game: five immense old bulls, who were feeding, rolling, and otherwise enjoying themselves with the greatest gusto.

They sprang to their feet the moment we were discovered, and stood eying us attentively for an instant, when they scampered off with that peculiar, rolling gallop, which, awkward and clumsy as it appears, requires the best speed of an Indian horse to overtake.

When they started, we gave our horses the rein, and dashed recklessly over the rough, uneven ground, as if the possibility of a fall was out of the question, each hunter pushing his horse to his utmost speed. Malnouri and I, being both splendidly mounted, went ahead, and rapidly neared the bulls. Selecting one that appeared to have the best robe, we followed him up, and soon separated him from the others, whereupon he plunged down a rugged defile, through which we chased him at the top of our speed, clearing rocks and gullies as if they were trifles. As the bull sprang upon a high ledge, I fired, and leaped my horse after, when the animal, closely pressed, and enraged at the wound, turned savagely on me, his horn, by a miracle, just missing my leg and my horse's flank. The well-trained horse skilfully avoided the shock and led the chase for a short distance, when the bull, feeling

the effects of the ball, turned off and lumbered down the valley in a contrary direction. Malnouri had whipped up to intercept him, and was just raising his gun to fire, when Antoine, followed at a little distance by Smith, came galloping over the hill at a speed that was certainly surprising.

Antoine was no rider, and less of a hunter; moreover his horse was known to be afraid of buffalo. To our united astonishment, he rode straight for the bull, as if to bear him down by his impetus, and was within a few yards, when the latter suddenly stopped, and lowering his head, charged. In an instant "Rabbit" wheeled on his hind legs, as if on a pivot, and hurried off in an opposite direction; leaving Antoine to finish a somersault in the air, and land almost at the feet of the maddened brute.

Seeing his imminent danger, we all pressed on, shouting at the top of our lungs, old Jeff exclaiming through his clenched teeth, "Run like ——, Antoine!" a most timely piece of advice, which was instantly followed, Antoine making the snow fly in clouds with hands and feet; and the bull continuing his flight, he was soon out of harm's reach. All this passed in a few seconds, and leaving him to regain his breath, and hunt up his flying "Rabbit," we soon caught up with our bull, who was now well-nigh exhausted. His uplifted tail flirted wickedly

from side to side, and his head was lowered, ready to charge. Malnouri incautiously attempting to cross his path, the bull made a lunge, and took his horse under the flank. Horse and rider were both in imminent peril, when Jeff wheeled short around, and drew the bull off by attacking him on the other side. He ran a few yards further into a hollow, and the blood poured from his mouth dyeing the snow crimson; his eye-balls turned a brilliant red, and directly all was over.

The horse, a fine powerful animal, had sustained very little injury, to our great surprise and Malnouri's unbounded joy; the bull's horns being worn and blunt. We took only the skin and a few pieces of meat, and returned to the fort in good spirits over the incidents of the hunt.

Parties of Riccarees frequently visited the Post, from their winter camp near the Red Springs. Buffalo were very scarce throughout the entire lower country, and there was a great deal of suffering among the Sioux on Heart River and Long Lake, in consequence. Many were obliged to kill their horses to avoid starvation, and there were rumors of the Medicine Bear's band desiring to make peace with the Rees and Gros Ventres, in order to procure corn. After which, it would not be long before the peace would be broken. A couple of years

previously, the Yanc-toh-wahs under Big-Head, after a long period of hostility, met the Gros Ventres at their village, and smoked the pipe of peace with them. While the big men were sitting together in social fellowship, some of the young Sioux bucks stole a large band of horses from the Gros Ventres, and made off with their booty.

Such proceedings made the peace a mere farce, for neither party had sufficient confidence in the other to wish to keep it.

The inextinguishable hatred between these two nations, Minnetarees and Yanc-toh-wahs, owed its immediate origin to an affair that happened some twenty years before, when the Gros Ventres, then quite a powerful tribe, lived on Knife River, just above the Mandan (now Riccaree) village. During a winter of unusual severity, a small party of Yanc-toh-wahs, numbering about sixteen lodges, came to the Gros Ventres to make peace, and relieve their pressing necessities by trading corn. Confiding in the friendship of the latter, the Sioux camped about a day's travel from the village, intending to remain until spring. A few of the ambitious spirits among the Gros Ventres thought it would be a glorious chance, by rubbing out these same lodges, to "count a big coup" upon their enemies; one that would "make them cry for many moons." It was done;

and since that time, all attempts to preserve a permanent peace between the Gros Ventres and Yanctoh-wahs, have been unavailing. The old sore still rankles.

During one of the visits of the Rees, a young Indian was seized with an epileptic fit in the night. He fainted, bloody foam oozed from his lips, and he whinnied like an elk. His comrades were afraid to remain with him, and one of them told the interpreter that an elk had thrown his medicine upon him, and at certain changes of the moon he had these attacks, and imagined himself for the time being, that animal. The next morning he was apparently as well as ever, but before taking his departure, the rascal stole a scarlet blanket that was wrapped around one of the dead people; an act of vandalism which would have been severely punished, had it been discovered by any of the deceased's relatives. The effects of the dead are usually held sacred, except by open foes.

Soon after these events I returned to camp, intending to remain there until spring.

CHAPTER XIX.

INDIANS MAKE "MEDICINE TO BRING THE BUFFALO"—POTENCY OF DREAMS—ORDERS OF THE SOLDIERS—A LARGE FAMILY—WHITE-COW BAND—STRONG MEDICINE—A BULL IN CAMP!—TRIUMPHANT DANCE OF THE WHITE COWS—"PLENTY OF BUFFALO!"

WHILE at winter-quarters I made frequent hunting excursions through the neighboring points, and often extended my tramps to a considerable distance. Deer were plenty, though very wild, from being so much hunted by the Indians. A fat haunch of venison was always a most acceptable addition to our larder, and now that all kinds of game were in their prime, we lived literally on the fat of the land. Prairie chickens were very abundant, and enough for a savory stew could be shot at almost any time, within a few hundred yards of the camp. In very cold weather they scarcely heeded the crack of a rifle, and I have killed several off the same tree, commencing at the lowest, that the falling body might not alarm the others.

Herds of deer were often chased from the timber

on to the ice, by the wolves. The buffalo, although very plenty, were at too great a distance to hunt and return the same day, and how to bring them closer was a subject of much anxious consultation among the Indians.

Several young men, animated by the hopes of success, and the honors which it would confer upon them, made great exertions to achieve the desired result. Four-Bears was at the head of the "bring buffalo" party; he was continually excusing his inefficiency by saying that he could not "dream right," to which Iddy-weah-iddy-qush (the-one-that-strikes-the-women,) drily remarked that he *would not* dream right, until the weather turned cold and stormy, and drove the buffalo close to the shelter of the timber; which was looking at the matter in a very practical light.

A young man, the Red Cherry, next offered to bring the buffalo; if successful, a horse, was to be the reward; but he wisely deferred the time of action as long as possible, thereby hoping to increase his chances of success.

Meanwhile, all prayed that the Four-Bears might be able to dream to some purpose; which he said he could not do, until a war-eagle of a certain size had been shot, and although every effort was made, it seemed impossible to secure one.

Finally it was agreed to let the Red-Cherry try *his* powers.

The next morning, before the sun rose, Red-Cherry went to the top of the highest butte that overlooked the camp, and began to cry and pray to the Great Spirit. He was to make his medicine for three days and nights, fasting all the while, at the expiration of which time, if it was good, the buffalo could not fail to come.

That no counteracting influences might operate against him, the soldiers forbade the chopping or cutting of firewood by the squaws, and exercised the utmost vigilance to prevent all sounds. Any unlucky squaw who was so forgetful or reckless of consequences as to venture to chop firewood, was sure to have her axe seized and her wood scattered; and if she escaped a sound beating, might consider herself remarkably fortunate.

During this embargo, the only fuel that could be obtained was dry brush or small twigs, which could be easily broken by hand without making much noise. Singing, and the everlasting sound of the drum, for a time ceased; even the dogs seemed to know what was going on, and in a great measure suspended their vocal exercises. Travel and hunting were strictly prohibited, and a young man who had gone after deer a few points below the camp,

not far from the mouth of the Little Missouri, was met on his return by several of the soldiers, who whipped him severely, and destroyed his gun and bow and arrows, cutting his robe and meat to pieces. Scouts were kept stationed on the hills to discover, and two fine horses were ready to be given to the Red-Cherry in event of his medicine proving good and strong.

The evening of the third day came, and brought no tidings of the approach of buffalo. Opinions began to be freely expressed that the "medicine" was worthless, and the Four-Bears, who had not yet been able to dream, was gloomy and despondent.

There was no meat in camp; some families began to experience the pangs of hunger, and the tide of popular feeling was setting in very strong against the would-be "Medicine man."

The unsuccessful aspirant for medical distinction said, in self-defence, that if a spotted running horse had been offered him, instead of two common pack-horses, his medicine would have worked to a charm, and the hearts of all the people in the village would have been made glad by seeing the surrounding prairies "black all over with a terrible plenty of buffalo." His friends (for he had many) began to think he might be correct, and were disposed to grant him further opportunity.

I had been living for three days on parched corn, not even having coffee to help it down, and was extremely anxious that the buffalo should come in, without caring whether it was by the dreaming of the Four-Bears or the medicine of the Red-Cherry.

The second attempt was prolonged over four days, when Ou-keh-shay (The-First-Feather-on-the-wing) announced that he had discovered something on the high hills in the direction of the lake. Every one's heart beat high with hope and joy; the Red-Cherry's star was in the ascendant, when a more careful reconnoissance showed the objects to be a small band of horses that had been out in *câche*, and were now being driven up by their owner. So Red-Cherry was again unsuccessful, and the Last-Stone intimated, in unmistakable terms, that he was a fool, a humbug, and even threatened to whip him.

Something must be done; already a few of the malcontents talked of scattering the camp, and moving about until they got into a better hunting-ground.

In this emergency, when all was doubt and uncertainty, the White-Cow band, the *corps du reserve*, took the matter in hand, and as their medicine was never known to fail, a better and more cheerful feeling soon pervaded the entire camp. The restrictions on cutting and chopping were removed, and

everything soon fell into the old routine. The great secret of the success of the White-Cow band lay in the fact, that when they undertook to bring buffalo, the dancing was kept up vigorously night and day *until buffalo came.*

The lodge of my host, the Bear-Hunter, was its headquarters, and his five squaws all belonged to the band. He had three log-cabins, opening into a spacious round earth lodge, whose dirt floor was beaten hard and smooth. His horses and mine, twenty-five head in all, were kept in one part, which was fenced off for the purpose, leaving ample space for the Terpsichorean exercises which were taking place almost every night; and so used did I become to the constant singing, drumming, and dancing, that I scarcely noticed it. On grand occasions the beauty and fashion of the village assembled here, and it was consequently the most popular and frequented locality in the camp.

The five tongues of the old Bear-Hunter's squaws were unsurpassed for the ease and rapidity with which they reported all the news of the hour. Two dogs could not get into a fight at the farthest extremity of the village without these women being almost instantly apprised of it. The charms of the second one had long since faded; she had lost an eye and was quite lame, but her powers of speech

remained unimpaired. In the blissful moments, like angels' visits few and far between, when a profound silence reigned in Bedlam, this female Cyclops would be sure to rise and kindle a blazing fire, and let loose her unruly member.

It made not the slightest difference to her whether there were auditors or not; the sound of her own charming voice was company enough.

This lady was the presiding genius of the White Cows, and she had now a world of business to look after. Small boys, masked and disguised so that it was impossible to recognize them, and carefully muffled up in robes with the hairy side out, were sent from lodge to lodge in the evening, before the dance commenced. These were making medicine to ascertain where the buffalo might be found. On entering a lodge they would sit motionless and without uttering a word, until some trifling present was given to the medicine; when they jumped up, and after going through a short shuffling dance, took their departure.

The different members of the White-Cow band began to assemble, and soon the regular taps of the drum notified the camp that the great and important ceremony was in full progress. At one end of the lodge sat the musicians or drummers, three in number, who were untiring in their efforts, and

aided their instrumentation by singing in a monotonous chanting strain. The women, comprising some forty or fifty matrons of the village, most of whose charms had unmistakably faded, were all attired in their quaintly garnished deer-skin dresses. Each had a spot of vermilion on either cheek, and their long black hair, which was carefully combed out and dressed with marrow grease, fell full and flowing over their shoulders, confined around the forehead with a fillet of white buffalo cow-skin. One of them had a white robe (which is very scarce, and held in the highest esteem) wrapped around her. This white robe was the common property of the band, and in its great power as a "medicine" were centred their hopes of bringing in the buffalo.

The dance was kept up at short intervals for over a week without any signs of success. Every night the lodge was densely crowded with eager and anxious spectators, and if good wishes exerted any influence, the White-Cow band had them in abundance. On the surrounding hills the scouts directed their eyes toward all the points from which it was likely the herds would come.

On the opposite side of the river was a lofty butte standing alone. It was several hundred feet high, and almost perpendicular on the face; but was easily mounted from the rear by a long, gently sloping

ascent. On the very summit were placed a couple of buffalo-skulls, with pieces of scarlet cloth fastened around each horn. Two medicine poles were also set up, with pieces of calico flying from them, gifts to propitiate the Great Spirit, that he would send them plenty of buffalo.

This butte was a famous lookout, commanding the prairies for many miles in every direction.

The Black Hills near Knife River, marking the head of the Big Bend, were plainly visible, and appeared close at hand.

Among the rugged bluffs that rose one above another, was a remarkable group, known and justly so, as the Square Hills, conspicuous and noted landmarks for miles around. The whole country on the opposite side from that on which the camp was located, seemed spread out at one's feet; while on either hand the view extended for miles, and any bands of buffalo coming down from the upper country were certain to be discovered.

I was upon this butte one afternoon with several Indians, vainly hoping to discover something by aid of my glass. The Indians were pointing out various places of interest, scenes of encounters with the foe, or exploits of the chase. We spent several hours very agreeably in this manner, and returning to the lodge, I watched the dancers for a

while; then stretching myself on my robe, indulged in reverie, from which I was roused by an unearthly clamor among the dogs, and a general rush outside by the Indians.

Hastily snatching up my gun, I ran out to learn the cause of the excitement. Strong Medicine! A huge buffalo bull was charging wildly about, not twenty yards from the lodge wherein the White-Cow band were dancing! The old fellow was bayed by fully one half the dogs in the village, and rushed hither and thither in his blind, impotent fury, tossing the dogs in front, and kicking and plunging to avoid those in his rear. He dashed headlong among the lodges, seeing only his canine tormentors, and, of course, paid no heed to the eager crowd of Indians.

All were astonished and delighted beyond expression at this remarkable answer of the Great Spirit to their prayers and offerings, and but one opinion prevailed, that the bull had been specially sent to show them that the efforts of the White-Cow band were not in vain. Directly the report of a fusee was heard, and lumbering on a little farther, the "Medicine Bull" fell on the sandbar and breathed his last; but while his limbs were yet quivering with recent life, a multitude of knives were busily at work, and in a few moments a pool of blood, which the dogs were eagerly lapping up, only remained.

The White-Cows came forth from their lodge and danced around the village. While thus engaged, a young man rode up at full speed and reported that a fine band of cows had just been discovered close to Rising Water. The soldiers at once directed old Snakeskin to harangue, forbidding any chopping or noise, and for the hunters to bring up all their horses, and be ready to surround in the morning.

Hearty congratulations on the wonderful strength and efficacy of the medicine of the White-Cow band were exchanged on every side, and soon a tripod, over which was thrown the far-famed white robe, was set up on top of the lodge, and joy and gladness animated the entire camp.

The next day the hunters went out and surrounded with success; and it was well they did, for a terribly severe spell of weather succeeded, during which it stormed and snowed with such fury that none durst travel. When it cleared off, the whole prairie, from the dividing ridge near Knife River to the Rising Water, and beyond it as far as the eye could reach, was *literally black with countless thousands of buffalo.*

The winter's hunt, thus auspiciously inaugurated, bid fair to be a complete success. Every few days the hunters went out, and returned late in the afternoon with their horses heavily packed with fat and

delicious meat, which was soon cut into thin sheets and hung on the scaffolds to dry, out of reach of the dogs, whose well-filled sides showed that they too were making up for their involuntary fast. I went out frequently with the hunters, and the novelty having long since worn off, looked upon it as a regular business, and not merely an exciting pastime.

CHAPTER XX.

BUFFALO HUNT IN THE SNOW — BUTCHERING — FEASTING — DELICACIES — DEADLY EFFECTS OF THE INDIAN ARROW — ACCIDENTS — SWEAT HOUSES — CURING TONGUES.

THE spectacle of a buffalo hunt when the ground was covered with snow was even more thrilling than in the summer-time. The danger was also greatly lessened by the soft, white carpet spread thickly over the prairie, serving to break the fall of any unfortunate hunter whose horse by a misstep might throw him. The night before a hunt takes place, the band of soldiers meet in their lodge and appoint some one of experience to head the party. The leader thus chosen has full authority for the time being, and every hunter must conform to his orders.

No sooner is this settled than some long-winded old fellow is directed to harangue through the camp, "Bring up the horses, and prepare to go to the surround," naming the leader and the time of starting.

The squaws bestir themselves to provide plenty

of cottonwood bark, that the horses may have something to eat during the long night, and see that the saddles and apishamores are in complete order, taking care to tie a bundle of raw-hide cords to the horn of each pack-saddle, by which to secure the meat. The hunters look carefully to their weapons, and whet their butcher-knives to a keen edge.

Long before daylight all are aroused by the cry, "Get up, get up, and saddle your horses!" While the hunters eat their breakfast the women attend to this, and as soon as each one is ready, he starts off, leading his horses, sometimes accompanied by a squaw to assist in butchering and packing the meat.

Every hunter takes from two to four horses, these being as many as he can properly manage. The favorite buffalo-horse trots along loose, carrying only a light skin pad stuffed with deer or antelope hair. The hunter rides one of his pack-horses, in order that his "runner" may be fresh for the severe labor of the chase.

Arrived at the rendezvous previously designated by the leader, who is there with his lance or insignia of rank, they halt until the whole party has assembled. All now ride in a compact body, taking care never to press too closely on the leader, who, with several experienced friends, keeps well in advance, to discover the game before coming near enough to

alarm it. The only sound that breaks the dead silence of these snow-clad plains is the crunching of the horses' feet as they break through the frozen crust, or the occasional jingle of the equipments.

We ride steadily on until our leader comes to a sudden halt, and the hunters eagerly gather round him. The band of buffalo we intend to "run" is before us, and more than a mile distant; and the wind is very favorable, blowing from them to us.

The customary deliberative pipe is lit, and a plan of attack agreed upon, and communicated to the hunters in a few words by the leader. We start again; trotting and cantering along by turns more rapidly than we have yet done, each horse being fully alive to the exciting scenes that will soon be enacted. A wide *détour* is made, and under cover of a deep roll of the prairie, we approach as near as possible without alarming the herd. Not many words are uttered, for each one understands his business; the pack-horses are quickly hobbled and left, together with everything superfluous. Mounting the runners, whose impatient restlessness can hardly be controlled, with bows and arrows grasped firmly in their hands, the hunters are ready for the onset.

Many ride bareback, with only a lariat around the lower jaw to manage the horse, who is so well

trained, and so perfectly understands his rider's wishes, that it usually hangs loose upon his neck or trails behind.

We ride abreast, gradually extending our front like the horns of a crescent, to make the "surround" as perfect as possible. Insensibly we quicken our pace, and are careering forwards at full gallop. The horses snort impatiently, with heads and tails erect, and the quick glances of their eyes tell the excitement they fully share, evidently feeling, as the Indians say, "as if their hearts were glad."

Faster and faster we go; we are close on the herd, which, now thoroughly alarmed, huddle together for a brief instant, and then dash madly off, directing their course against the wind, the fattest cows leading the van. Our leader's lance is lowered; now is the time, and every horse is stretched out at his utmost speed. The buffalo appear to rise out of the ground as we rush on, until what at first seemed but a small band has increased to an immense herd. In a few minutes the fastest horses have carried their riders among them in every direction; and selecting their meat, they pursue it until killed. An occasional shot is heard, but the work of destruction is chiefly accomplished by the bow and arrow.

In a few moments some of the cows fall behind, gradually slackening their speed until they come to

a stand-still. The blood flows freely from their mouths, and they soon lie down to rise no more. Perhaps, here and there a severely though not fatally wounded buffalo has been brought to bay, and shows fight, charging upon his pursuer whenever he rides too close, and calling into play the agility of the horse, who, by skilfully wheeling, avoids the shock. A well-directed shot settles the question; and while bristling with impotent fury, the crimson tide gushes from her mouth, and she convulsively breathes her last.

The white prairie is soon dotted with the black carcasses of the victims; wolves skulk at a little distance, impatiently awaiting their anticipated feast; and flocks of ravens, flying low and croaking hoarsely, make their appearance so suddenly that no one knows whence they come. Here a hunter has been thrown, by his horse's getting his foot into one of the many holes with which the prairie is filled, but the thick carpet of snow has saved him from receiving serious injury. The more expert hunters will kill from three to five cows in a chase, and claim their game by the marks on their arrows.

When the hunt is over, they return and look up their meat; then driving up the pack-horses, begin the work of butchering. The buffalo generally falls in a natural position, as if lying down; and the

hunter splits the skin down the back, and twisting the fingers of his left hand in the long hair of the hump, pulls the robe toward him, while he rapidly cuts the tissue with his knife. An Indian will skin a buffalo very rapidly, but always leaves more or less flesh adhering to it, which has to be removed by the women before dressing it. The meat is cut away from the bones in large pieces, some of them weighing over a hundred pounds. The two sides of ribs are taken off and tied together by a cord to balance each other on the saddle.

The tongue, heart, kidneys, liver, paunch, marrow-guts, "boudin" and brains, being esteemed great delicacies, are carefully saved. When there is plenty of meat, the large bones and coarse pieces are always thrown aside, but in times of scarcity there is absolutely nothing left but the head; even the blood is regarded as a luxury and saved. The horses are next to be packed; half of the green skin is thrown over the saddle, then the heavy boneless pieces of meat, after which come the ribs and miscellaneous portions, and over all the remaining half of the robe. The meat and robe of a cow is considered a fair load for a horse; but I have often seen a cow and a half packed on, when the distance was short, or a cow, and a heavy man riding on top. This kind of work is very severe on both horses and

men; for, starting early they are generally a whole day in the cold without eating anything.

From the hunting-ground to the camp, the speed is a steady jog-trot, no matter what the distance may be, and party after party come together at the big trail made in the morning. As the sun gets low, the horses are urged on, and when within two or three miles of camp, the dogs, scenting the meat, rush out at full speed, noticing no one until they find their masters, when they trot along in company, occasionally tugging at the meat as it hangs temptingly low.

When the party descended the bluffs, following the trail that led to the well-sheltered bottom in which the camp was pitched, the tired and heavily-laden horses often slipped and fell in the steep and icy path.

Sparks from the lodge-fires greeted the hungry hunters, and the dogs, smelling the fresh meat from afar, began their usual howling. As each one arrived at his lodge, the squaws rushed out to take charge of the horses, unpacking the meat, removing the saddles, and placing a bountiful supply of cottonwood-bark before them. While the tired hunter divests himself of his equipments, a choice piece of meat is cooking for him. A comfortable pipe succeeds, and as friends drop in, the feasting is

renewed, until all are fully satiated. The details of the morning hunt are given; how many men were out, where the buffalo were first seen, whose horse was the fastest, and who had killed the fattest cow; all are discussed and commented upon with the greatest earnestness and gravity.

The women seize upon the titbits with avidity, and roasting marrow-guts and making "boudin," keep them fully employed until a late hour.

Indian squaws are the best cooks of meat in the world; they know exactly when it is *done;* that is, cooked thoroughly, yet retaining *all the juicy richness and flavor.* The hump-ribs or bos are delicious when boiled, and a side of fat ribs carefully roasted ought to satisfy anybody. But one of the very best pieces on a buffalo is a thin strip of flesh on the *inner* side of the ribs; it is simply thrown on a bed of coals; the thick skin prevents the flesh from burning and the juice from escaping.

The tongue, when roasted for several hours in a bed of ashes, is very fine; but a young calf before it is born, is considered the greatest delicacy of all. When first eaten, early in the winter, it is never larger than a kitten and gradually increases in size until near spring, when it becomes too large and coarse. The idea of eating such a barbarous dish was at first revolting, but afterwards, when better

able to appreciate these Indian luxuries, I found it very palatable, particularly the natural liquor or broth in which it was boiled; which with the addition of salt and pepper made an excellent soup.

After a hunt the horses are allowed a little much-needed rest; the women find active employment in cutting and jerking the meat for future use, and stretching the skins to dry, after carefully removing the flesh which adheres.

The men strolled from lodge to lodge, marvelling greatly at the remarkable strength of the medicine of the White-Cow band, relating anecdotes of the chase, and commenting upon the skill of some of the most noted hunters in the tribe. The Last-Stone, when younger, was one of the very best buffalo-hunters the Gros Ventres ever had. It was said of him that "he could kill on any kind of a horse," or, in other words, he depended more upon his skill as a marksman, to bring down his game at long distances, than upon the speed of his horse to carry him to close quarters. Last-Stone was a large fleshy man, and he told me that, when in the full prime and vigor of life, he could shoot an arrow on horseback entirely through the body of a buffalo, so that it would drop to the ground on the opposite side. The Indians also talked about "The Yellow," (now dead,) who is said to have actually killed three

cows with a single arrow. He was of course riding close up when he shot; the shaft passed entirely through the bodies of two cows, the point projecting several inches on the opposite side; the third cow jostled against it in the general scamper, and the point penetrating her vitals caused her death.

It has often been a matter of surprise to me that more accidents do not happen in buffalo-hunting, when we take into consideration the reckless speed at which they ride over the roughest and most rugged ground, the danger of getting accidentally shot, or of being impaled on the horns of an infuriated cow. In the autumn, when the ground is hard frozen and before it is covered with snow, the hunter is constantly liable to severe falls from the horse stepping into holes. In the spring also, when the snow has thawed away, leaving the ground soft and very slippery, buffalo-hunting is attended with much greater risk than in midwinter.

The Indian horses are so well trained that they not only watch the buffalo to escape a collision, but also keep a sharp lookout for holes and bad places on the prairie, avoiding them with surprising skill. When the rider has picked out his cow, the horse follows it up with loosened rein, or lariat trailing behind him on the ground. He runs boldly up, on the right side, within a few feet; and the instant the

arrow is shot, swerves off to avoid the charge which is almost sure to follow. As soon as the cow resumes her course, he comes up again after giving the rider time to fit another shaft; and no matter how fiercely the maddened animal turns upon him, skilfully wheels around, as if on a pivot, and allows the buffalo to pursue him, as it always does for a short distance.

I often rode an old, well-trained horse, which we called "Mac," (after Owen McKenzie, who was one of the very best buffalo-hunters, white or red, on the prairies.) The old horse knew, by long experience, exactly how far to avoid a lunge, and was no more afraid of closing up with a wounded cow than of joining his comrades on the plain. Nevertheless, in spite of all the skill of both horse and rider, the former is sometimes severely, if not fatally injured. The Poor-Wolf lost his splendid black steed in this way. He had wounded a cow, and closing up had given her another arrow, when at the moment of the charge the horse plunged up to his shoulders in a snow-drift, and was utterly powerless to escape. The Poor-Wolf was thrown, and the buffalo's horn made a terrible gash in the horse's flank. With a convulsive bound he sprang up and dashed wildly over the prairie, treading on and tearing out his entrails, and after running a short distance, fell dead.

A similar accident happened at the very next hunt. A horse belonging to He-who-strikes-the-women was ridden by a young man who was considered an excellent hunter, but the buffalo crowded on him so closely that he had no room to manœuvre, and the sharp horn of a cow ripped the horse's belly, causing the entrails to protrude. The horse was instantly stopped, and assistance coming up, he was thrown, the entrails replaced, and the rent sewed up with a sinew; after which he was able to be led back to the camp several miles distant, fed as usual, and eventually recovered. I saw him frequently afterwards; a scarcely perceptible scar was the only remaining trace of the accident, and this would not be noticed, even by a careful observer, unless specially pointed out. The horse ran as well, and seemed to be in every respect as valuable as before.

After returning from a hunt, the sweat-houses are freely used, the hunters seeking by this means to invigorate themselves after their exhausting efforts. Nearly every lodge is provided with one, being merely a low hut of willow-boughs, just large enough to admit one or two in a stooping posture. When used, it is covered with skins, stones are heated in the fire, and placed inside; the occupant divests himself of his clothing, and the opening

being carefully closed, raises a vapor by pouring water from a kettle on the hot stones. After remaining inside until nearly suffocated, and sweating profusely from every pore, he comes out and rubs himself over with snow, or, if the river is open, plunges in; then retires to his lodge, and wrapping himself in his robe, enjoys a refreshing sleep.

Upon returning from a hunt of more than usual severity, and complaining of fatigue to the Bear-Hunter, he insisted upon my trying a "sweat." I found the effect far beyond my utmost anticipations, and afterwards resorted to it whenever experiencing over-fatigue, always with the happiest results.

There was considerable rivalry at this time between the two companies, on the subject of trading buffalo-tongues from the Indians, and the prices went up accordingly. The Indians were the gainers of course, and were shrewd enough to make good use of their advantage.

For several days after a hunt the traders for both parties were constantly on the alert to get all the tongues they could; and so recklessly was the competition carried on that profit was totally lost sight of. An Indian having two or three tongues would stop at one trading-house and mention the fact, to ascertain what he could get for them; then

going to the other would tell the same story, of course magnifying the price offered. Having obtained another bid, he would return to the first parties and report; the original price would be increased, and perhaps after a good deal of talking, the trade would be pretty equally divided, the Indians saying that it was to their interest to support "two whites;" which it certainly was.

The tongues are salted by the traders (not by the Indians, as is generally supposed), and after being dried are sometimes painted over with molasses and water, to improve their appearance, and give them a dark smoky color. They are shipped to St. Louis in the spring, together with the robes and peltries, and are eagerly sought after as great delicacies.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN ABODE IN THE WINTER CAMP — MAKING MEAT — MY COMRADE THE BOBTAIL WOLF — HIS LESSONS IN THE LANGUAGE — HONESTY OF THE GROS VENTRES — THEIR PAST HISTORY — MATRIMONIAL RAVAGES OF THE SMALL-POX — AFFECTING INCIDENT.

THE buffalo still continued very plenty around the winter-quarters, and were often in plain sight.

The clean, well-trodden paths, the curling smoke from the lodges, and the scaffolds heavily laden with the choicest pieces of meat drying for future use, presented a very comfortable appearance. Every one appeared satisfied, and a genial feeling pervaded the whole camp.

The lodge in which I dwelt was filled inside and out with meat; and when there was no more room on the scaffolds, poles were stretched across the interior of the cabin, heavily loaded with additional supplies. As fast as that on the scaffolds was fit to pack away, the meat inside would take its place, thus leaving room for fresh pieces.

I was constrained to crawl on my hands and knees sometimes to get to my corner, where I liked to recline upon my robe, and listen to the gossip of the hour. The crowded condition of things had one advantage: it kept away all idlers; and those who had anything to trade, never hung around, as was their custom, after transacting business.

Nearly every day I went to the lodge of my comrade and friend the Bobtail-Wolf. The old chief was not such a politician as the Four-Bears, but was still respected and listened to by all. He was very fond of teaching me the language, which I wrote down as he pronounced it, and by this means made rapid progress. He would unweariedly repeat a word over and over again, until I had caught the correct pronunciation. Many of the principal men made his lodge their head-quarters, and the talk was always about Indian fashions or customs, very seldom degenerating into mere gossip. His squaw invariably provided something for us to eat, and many a piece of calf, or boudin, or bos did we enjoy at her hands. When at the summer village, the old man spent the best part of his time in my house, and he was ever welcome, for he had plenty to talk about, and was an excellent hand to entertain the visitors that were constantly dropping in.

During the whole time that I lived among the

Gros Ventres I never missed a single article, although I took no trouble to keep my things out of sight. My house would often be crowded with Indians; sometimes only one or two would be present; yet if called away, I felt satisfied that on my return I would find everything just as I left it.

But when any Rees or Crows were about, it was very different. They would steal anything they could lay hands on, and required constant watching; even the Gros Ventres frequently complained of their thieving proclivities.

The old chief Bobtail-Wolf was exceedingly solicitous for me to take unto myself a wife, and had settled upon several squaws whom he considered eligible. I put him off from day to day until he began to think it was high time for me to make a decided move in the matrimonial direction. "My son," said he one morning, after the customary pan of bouillon, "it is time for you to take a wife. There is the Long-Hair's daughter, a good young woman who garnishes moccasins well, works hard for her father's lodge, dresses robes and carries wood. You told me that you had the heart of a Gros Ventre; that your blood was red like ours. Why don't you make your words good?"

This was certainly bringing matters to a point; and after due deliberation I replied that what he

said was good and true, — the Long-Hair's daughter was all that he claimed for her, but I did not feel like taking such a responsibility at present. "But," said I, stripping up the sleeve of my shirt and showing him the difference between the white skin and the part tanned by exposure to wind and weather, "you see my arm is gradually turning darker and darker, becoming like an Indian's. When I am changed all over, I will be ready to marry the Long-Hair's daughter."

This ridiculous answer, strange as it may seem, pleased the old man amazingly, and from that moment he looked upon my marriage as a settled fact, the question being only of time.

On one occasion some of the old men were talking about the changes that had taken place in their nation. Many snows ago they were a part of the Crows and left them because they were too numerous. Their language is essentially the same, with such modifications as a long residence with the Mandans and Riccarees would be likely to make. They once occupied five villages, and the Bobtail-Wolf was chief of one. Incursions of their enemies, and the fearful ravages of small-pox and cholera so reduced their number that they formed at last but one village and dwelt upon the banks of Knife River, above the

old Mandan (Riccaree) village. At last they determined to seek the Crows and unite with them again. They deserted their village, abandoned their corn-fields, left the bones of those once loved and lost, and severing all old ties, crossed to the east shore of the Missouri, and started on their pilgrimage.

It was in the fall when they arrived at the site of the present village. The Four-Bears thought it would be a good place to winter in, and they accordingly prepared to remain until spring. When spring came, the Fur Company's steamboat arrived, and at the urgent solicitation of the Indians, a trader was left with a few goods. He took up his quarters in the Four-Bears' lodge.

The squaws cut and dragged timber for a fort; the Gros Ventres gave up their idea of rejoining the Crows, and Fort Berthold was built. In time, the Opposition Company took the field, and established a post on the lower side of the village. With their "whites" on either side of them, and protected in their stockaded village, the Gros Ventres had little reason to fear the incursions of their enemies so long as they remained at home.

But the small-pox was an enemy that neither stockades nor bravery could keep away. That frightful disease is peculiarly fatal to the Indians,

and was unknown to them previous to the advent of the white man. The Mandans, from a large nation, have become reduced to a mere handful. All the tribes have suffered, but the Sioux have escaped with the least loss, as they immediately, upon the appearance of the disease, scattered in small camps throughout their country, and thus confined it to a single locality.

The last time the small-pox made its appearance on the Upper Missouri was in 1856, and the accounts I received from eye-witnesses were truly heart-rending. The Gros Ventres and Mandans suffered, of course, although not so severely as in former times, as they scattered immediately upon its breaking out. Around Fort William the Assinniboines lay encamped, threatening the whites with justly-merited vengeance. The houses in the fort were crowded with Indians in every stage of the disease. The moment they were attacked they sought the whites, feeling, doubtless, that as the latter had brought the pestilence, it was but just they should suffer some of the inconvenience.

Few, if any, of the employés of the Fur Company were attacked by the disease. The houses were kept as warm as possible, and many of the Indians who avoided exposure to the cold and snow, ultimately recovered. One case was peculiarly dis-

tressing. A whole family had been carried off; the mother had just died, leaving an infant of a few months old. The well had as much as they could attend to, and there was no one able or willing to take charge of the little orphan. It was placed in the arms of its dead mother, enveloped in blankets and a buffalo-robe, and set up on a scaffold, in the usual manner of burying the dead. Its cries were heard for some time; at last they grew fainter, and finally were stilled altogether in the cold embrace of death, with the north wind sounding its requiem and the wolves howling in the surrounding gloom a fitting dirge for so sad a fate. Nevermore in the happy Spirit-land would that mother and her child be parted.

CHAPTER XXII.

STARTLING NEWS — THE THREE GARREAUS KILLED — THEIR BODIES RECOVERED — DANGEROUS TRIP — CHRISTMAS IN CAMP — GRAND FEAST — APPROACH A BULL — NARROW ESCAPE.

PIERRE GARREAU'S three sons, who had gone out with the hunters, full of life and spirits, splendidly equipped, and mounted on their bounding steeds, were waylaid, killed, and scalped by a Sioux war-party. At one fell blow were swept away the young men and nine as fine horses as the Gros Ventre camp could boast of.

They were returning after a successful hunt, and when within only five or six miles of the camp, one of their pack-horses threw his load of meat and ran away. The brothers stopped behind the main body of the hunters to recover the truant steed.

Night came; the hunters were all in; fat ribs were roasting before blazing fires in the different lodges, and festivity and gladness prevailed, except in one. The next morning, a numerous and well-armed party, with Pierre Garreau at the head,

started out to learn, if possible, the fate of the missing hunters. Near the place where the boys turned back, a flock of ravens was seen circling in the air. The party proceeded cautiously, yet with anxious hearts, toward the spot. Their worst fears were realized,—there lay John, the youngest boy, scalped and gory, stripped of his ornaments. He was completely riddled with arrows, but they were all *front* wounds, showing that he had made a gallant defence. A little farther on, the remaining two were found, similarly butchered. Curses, not loud, but deep, came from the hearts of that warrior-band, and they swore that when the early spring-time came, they would strike such a blow as would cause a terrible wail in the camp of the foe, and would make them remember for many a day the revenge which they had brought upon themselves.

Without manifesting any emotion, Pierre directed the bodies to be conveyed to camp, and they were temporarily buried on a mound at the entrance of the trail leading through the timber.

The horses were gone of course, and from the marks on the arrows, the enemy were known to be Sioux.

Word was immediately sent to Pierre's relatives at the Ree village, and the moody silence throughout the camp expressed far more forcibly than

words the vengeance that would be taken upon the perpetrators of the outrage as soon as the plains should be free from snow.

Pierre gave away most of his property, as is the usual custom among Indians, and his two wives, although not the mothers of the deceased, cut their hair in token of grief.

Pierre was soon recalled to Fort Berthold, his great affliction rendering him totally unfit to remain in camp as a trader; and his place was supplied by Paquenaude who was then living as a free trapper. After Pierre's return to the fort, he had the bodies of his three boys brought down from camp, and reinterred in the presence of the whites from both posts. Not a sound broke the stillness, as the bodies were carefully lowered to their last resting-place; but when the men commenced throwing on the earth, the Indian women burst forth into their mournful cry. Pierre turned, and thanking those present for the kindness and sympathy which they had extended to him, said that it was a common feeling among all mankind, whether white or red, to wish their bones laid among those of their kindred, and not scattered to the four winds in some distant land.

No news of the reinterment was sent to the Ree camp until it was over; as Pierre did not want a vast concourse of his relations, crying and making a distressing affair of it.

Many moons had waxed and waned, the snows had long disappeared, and the air was soft and balmy, before Pierre Garreau became as of old, and his conversation continually turned upon the vengeance that would be taken upon the Sioux.

It was on one of the coldest days I ever remember, when I started to return to camp, after a brief sojourn at the post. Getting clear of the timber, a sharp, cutting head-wind whirled the frozen crystals of snow through the air, and all the exposed parts of my face were cut, as if by a knife. I was obliged to dismount, and leaving the trail turned into the bad lands, where I could make a snug camp, and remain until the wind lulled and travelling became more comfortable. I had left the trail with this idea but a short distance, when a faint column of smoke curling up from the middle of a point of timber, on the opposite side of the river, met my eye. I at once concluded that it was the lurking-place of a war-party, being midway between the forts and the winter-quarters, and an excellent position from which to discover.

Without a second thought I remounted, and travelled through the deep snow as fast as my horse could carry me, and late in the evening arrived at the camp, but not until my nose and cheeks were

slightly frozen, in spite of my fur wrappings. With one exception, I never felt the cold so severely as on this trip, and the Indians expressed great surprise at my travelling in such a head-wind, for none of them had left the shelter of the valley during the day. I mentioned what I had seen, and a party hurried off that same night to make further discoveries, but returned the following day without having seen anything. A couple of nights afterwards, however, a mule and three horses were missing, and the moccasin tracks left no doubt as to their having been stolen.

Christmas, the "Big Medicine" day of the whites, was fast approaching, and the Indians eagerly looked forward to it. For several years past it had been the custom of the traders to make a grand feast to the different bands, and the Indians usually acknowledged the compliment by "throwing" robes or other articles of value to the traders in return.

We made our feast a few days before Christmas, and the rivalry between the whites as to who would give the grandest entertainment, made it unusually interesting. Each band was called separately, and it was a good day's work to go the rounds. Our guests, while loud in their praises of our liberality, usually plead poverty as an excuse for not throwing robes as freely as they would like, which same plea

was as strongly urged by ourselves as an additional reason for their extending substantial patronage to us.

At the fort they celebrated the day with great spirit. The grand feature of the occasion was the dinner, at which ample justice was done to the prairie-chicken and rabbit pot-pies, buffalo-steaks, and puddings and dried-apple pie; the whole making a very fair spread-out for the "mountains." The men of the rival posts joined forces in the evening, and enjoyed a regular frolic, which they kept up until the small hours, one by one fairly dropping upon the floor from exhaustion and overloaded stomachs. Several dressed up as squaws, and took the part of women in the dance.

The day was remarkably fine, and the celebration passed off with *éclat*. A young dog had been fattening for some time to supply the place of a turkey; but unfortunately, just a few days before, he was run over by the wood-wagon, and crushed to death, which the squaws lamented bitterly.

The Gros Ventres seldom or never eat dog; but the Sioux consider it the very greatest delicacy, and to be "called" or invited to a dog-feast is a high compliment to a stranger.

Buffalo were as plenty and close to the camp as ever, but the Indians surrounded less frequently, as the severe work was beginning to tell on their

horses. The weather, too, was extremely cold, and at the last hunt, when the Wolf's-Eye was partisan, many of the Indians had their fingers frozen, and several were considerably hurt by their horses falling with violence. The Hawk had his ankle so much injured that it was several weeks before he was able to mount his horse again. Only about forty cows were killed, and even of these many were left untouched on the prairie, it being too cold to butcher them.

I was at the lake, about six miles distant from the camp, looking after some horses which we had in *câche* there, and finding them all right, crossed over to Shell Creek to inspect some beaver-lodges, with which the stream was filled. When about returning, a buffalo-bull emerged from the willows, not more than a quarter of a mile from me, and leisurely started across the prairie, stopping occasionally to paw away the snow and feed. The wind was very favorable, and I determined to approach him. Taking advantage of every inequality of the ground, I crawled on my hands and knees, dragging along my rifle, (protected from the snow by a skin cover,) and having a white blanket capote, with capeshaw of the same drawn over my head, at a little distance looked too much like a white wolf to excite the slightest apprehension in the bull, who continued cropping the grass in the most unconcerned manner.

I was gradually getting closer and closer to him, when a slight noise, made in breaking through the crust of the snow, alarmed him. He stopped and looked around, but seeing nothing to justify his fears, went on feeding, gradually making his way toward some coolies or ravines not very far distant. I followed as fast as was prudent, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing the bull climb a butte, and disappear on the other side.

Following after as fast as possible, I gained the butte, and crawling cautiously up, looked over the brow, and saw my bull eating away with the most perfect unconcern not twenty yards distant. I had by this time crawled nearly half a mile, and was not at all grieved by the prospect of bringing my labors to a termination.

The first ball struck the bull fair in his "lights;" he gave a slight jump, and then stood still. The blood poured from his mouth, and tottering forward a few paces he sank quietly down upon his knees. I watched him, and seeing no further motion, concluded that, if not dead already, he was very near it, and accordingly moved directly towards him, when, to my horror and amazement he suddenly sprang to his feet, lowered his head, and made for me. I turned and fled with all possible haste as far as I could go, through snow up to my knees, and would

have fared badly had not the friendly butte interposed and hid me from his sight, just when I was expecting to feel his horn in my back. Stopping only from sheer exhaustion, I looked back, and saw him stretched out in the last agonies. Making sure this time that he was actually dead, I returned and took his tongue as a trophy, leaving the rest of his carcass for the wolves, who were already in attendance in considerable numbers, and only waiting for my departure to begin their feast.

Ravens too were circling in the air, and when all had eaten their fill, the remains of the bull would be scanty indeed.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ECLIPSE OF THE MOON — INDIAN IDEAS — THUNDER, LIGHTNING, AND RAIN — PRIMITIVE WAYS — EXPRESS ARRIVES — TRAVEL IN A "POUDERIE" — TEDIOUS TRIP — LAME HORSE — RETURN TO POST.

IT was time to return to the Fort again with the robes, tongues, and peltries which had accumulated since my last trip. Early on the morning I expected to start we were roused by a great uproar in camp; men firing guns, women crying, and the dogs of course contributing their share to the general racket. I hurried out of the lodge to see what it was all about.

The night was clear and beautiful, but the silvery beams of the full moon did not fall as brightly as usual. Darkness was slowly drawing its veil over the scene.

The old men harangued, and when the shadow passed away, and the moon shone brilliantly out again, a general yell of exultation arose at the strength of the medicine, which had appeased the anger of the Great Spirit. The Indians have no

idea of what causes an eclipse, and believe that the shadow would always remain unless they drove it away by the power and strength of their medicine.

We had a toilsome journey to the fort, as the snow lay very deep in places, rendering it necessary sometimes to unload everything in order to extricate the animals. When the crust is frozen hard, it is a pleasure to travel, but it is very wearisome when the sun's rays have sufficient power to soften this crust, so that one step will be firm, and the next break through, oftentimes up to the horse's belly.

I was always glad when the promontory upon which the forts and village were built, came in sight, although at a distance of five or six miles; and the tired horses moved more briskly, knowing well that their labors, for the present at least, would soon be over.

A party of Gros Ventres, chiefly squaws, came down from camp at the same time, bringing with them the body of the Black Parflesh, who had died a day or so since, and must, according to custom, be buried on a scaffold in the rear of the village.

The weather was intensely cold, and the squaws experienced considerable difficulty in digging holes in the hard frozen earth, to set up the scaffold. It was in fact necessary to build a fire and thaw the ground before this could be done.

Doctor E-ten-ah-pen-ah was of the party, and stated that the ghost of the Black Parflesh appeared as he passed by his lodge in the village, and beckoned to him. The Doctor said that he felt his hair gradually rising up, and cocking both barrels of his gun he ran away as fast as he could.

Returning to camp, I found the buffalo beginning to scatter, and the hunters had consequently much farther to go "for meat." Scarcely had I unsaddled, ere the Four-Bears called me to a feast at his lodge, and on obeying the summons I found some eight or ten Indians assembled, while a splendid side of fat roasted ribs was being skilfully cut up by the senior Mrs. Four-Bears. After the well-picked bones had been carried away, and the pipe lit and passed around, the Four-Bears inquired what the Rees were doing, and if any later intelligence had been received from the Sioux camp. I gave all the information I possessed, and the conversation then took an entirely different turn.

My comrade, the Bobtail-Wolf, asked me if it was not almost time for the wild geese to return, for thunder and lightning, and the river to open. I replied, that nearly three moons must wane before those events would happen; and inquired if he could tell me what caused thunder and lightning.

He said that there was, high in air, far out of sight, flying continually and never resting, an eagle of terrible size. Upon his back he carries a lake full of water. When this aerial monster is out of humor, he flaps his wings, and loud peals of thunder roll over the prairie; when he winks his eyes, it lightens; and when he wags his tail, the waters of the lake on his back overflow, producing rain.

I admiringly assented to this philosophical explanation, and for several moments nothing was said, when the silence was broken by the Poor-Elk, declaring that the whites were bad; they brought sickness among the Indians; they were much better without the whites than with them. What need had they of traders? Did not the buffalo supply them with all they required? When their ammunition was expended, could they not fall back upon their bows and arrows? They were not raised like the whites to drink sugar and coffee, and it was terrible to see how fond they had become of it. Now, their young men would sooner sit in the whites' lodges, hoping to get a cup of coffee, than follow on the war-path or hunt the buffalo; they would soon be no better than women. He was in favor of driving all the traders out of the country.

"My friend," I replied, "you have no sense; you speak with a woman's tongue. It is very true that

you did without the whites once; but that was many snows ago, when you were but a few summers old. Now, if you were to drive them away, when your powder and balls were expended, you would fall back upon your bows and arrows. The arrows would not last forever, and when you wanted new ones, where would you get iron for the points? When your kettles wore out, what would your women do? Many snows have whitened the prairie since your people last made pots of clay; you have almost forgotten about them. When your knives were gone, the young men would find it very different from begging their whites for new ones, to use sharp stones, (flints,) as they did in the long ago."

"What the Yellow-Hair says is true," Four-Bears remarked; "we would find it very hard to do as we once did before we had whites. We are now a small people; our enemies are many and strong. We are almost afraid to go out on our own prairies to hunt the buffalo for fear our village might be attacked, and our women and children killed during our absence. We have got the whites (traders); we can't do without them, and we must take pity on them and give them life," (*i. e.* trade with them, and support them.)

These remarks silenced the Poor-Elk, who, in truth, did not mean what he said; only a little out

of humor at being refused something which he had asked, and took this method of venting his displeasure.

Indians who have been long accustomed to enjoy the many little comforts supplied by the traders, would, if wholly deprived of them, find it almost impossible to exist. Many years ago, it is true, when some of the patriarchs of the tribe were young men, and before the traders came among them, they lived in the most primitive style. Their knives and arrow-points were of flint, and many tribes had no cooking-utensils.

The Riccarees and Gros Ventres were, however, in more respects than one, in advance of the other prairie Indians. Out of a peculiar kind of clay they fashioned large pots of various shapes; after a time, from the effects of heat and use, these became hard and black like iron, and so strong that an ordinary blow with a stick or stone caused no injury. Some of the Rees still possess a few of these curious vessels, and regard them as relics of great value.

The arrival of the winter Express, bringing despatches from Mr. Clark, at the Blackfoot Post, although expected for some time, was an interesting event. The Indians were anxious to learn the movements of the Blackfeet, Crows, and Assinniboines,

and whether buffalo were plenty between the camp and the Yellowstone. The Express was brought thus far by a half-breed named Dauphiny, with one other man. They were to proceed as far as our fort, whence they would return, and the Express be forwarded by us to the Ree Post, on its way to St. Louis. From the Rees it would be dispatched to Fort Pierre, thence to Fort Randall, (a U. S. Post,) thence to Sioux City, where it would be put into the mail. Its route for many hundred miles lay through a wilderness, infested by hostile Indians, by whom, if discovered, the carriers' lives would be held of little account.

After resting over night, the Express continued on to the forts, and I went along, as it would devolve on me to carry it to the Rees. A day was spent in writing letters and preparing the requisition for goods for the coming year's outfit. The weather was cold and disagreeable; but having secured the services of a young Indian, the Pretty-Wing, as guide, I felt no hesitation about starting.

We left early, for we had a long and fatiguing ride before us, the snow being very deep in many places. For a few miles we travelled under the bluffs, which sheltered us from the wind; but when we crossed the river and gained the high prairie, the chilling northern blasts had full sweep, blowing

the light snow in clouds, and making it utterly impossible to see more than a few yards in any direction. Fortunately, it was a back wind, which greatly lessened its effects.

We plodded steadily on, making our way, sometimes with great difficulty, through the numerous ravines or coolies filled with snow; and more than once were compelled to take a *détour* to find a suitable crossing-place. Instead of following the summer trail across the open prairie, my guide kept the river in sight the whole time. This made the road a great deal longer; but to have attempted crossing the plain in that driving "*poudérie,*" would have been madness. Had we been foolish enough to have tried it, we might have lost our course in the blinding storm, and perished on the open prairie.

We had progressed well on our dreary journey when we encountered a large party of Rees, moving from their winter camp at the Red Springs, on account of the scarcity of buffalo, in search of a better hunting-ground. They were all completely enveloped in their robes; and hurried on, anxious to gain the shelter of the timber, for they had the driving storm directly in their faces.

We kept on for some distance further, when the high bluffs and sheltered dells told us that we could not be far from the Red Springs, where more than

half the Rees were still encamped. Soon we saw horses feeding here and there on the hillsides, a cheerful contrast to the dreary waste through which we had passed; and descending a steep hill, found ourselves in the timber, with the lodges of the Riccarees close at hand. Very few Indians were stirring; even the dogs took no notice of us as we rode through the village, stopping only long enough for our guide to ask some questions concerning the best route to the Ree Post, where we arrived, hungry and tired, long after dark.

Major Hamilton soon had a hot cup of coffee ready, and after a substantial supper, we sat until a late hour, talking over the different items of news. Several Yanc-toh-wahs from their camp at the Painted Woods, twenty-five miles distant, were in the fort. They had suffered severely for want of food, and many were compelled to live upon horse-flesh. The Oncpapas and Blackfeet had not been heard of for some time, but were supposed to be in the vicinity of the Thin Hills with plenty of buffalo, the great depth of snow in the intervening country preventing communication between the camps. The Sioux expressed themselves very anxious to make peace with the Rees and Gros Ventres, as they invariably do when starving, in order to trade corn; but the latter placed no confidence in their Punic faith.

The next day we laid over to rest our horses, and passed it in visiting. Mr. Hodgkiss of the American Fur Company entertained me with interesting reminiscences of his life, he being one of the veteran mountaineers, having come up in 1832 as clerk for Captain Bonneville, whose graphic narrative is before the world.

Long before daylight on the following morning we were in the saddle; I found, to my inexpressible regret, that my horse, from some cause or other, was so lame in one foot as to be scarcely able to put it to the ground, and the Major gave me the comforting assurance that I would have to leave him on the road. As I was unable, from the scarcity of horses at the Post, to obtain a substitute, I determined to push on as fast as possible, trusting to luck to get through.

There are few things so discouraging to a traveller as to find his horse unfit for duty at the very time his best powers are required. In this unpleasant state of affairs we commenced our homeward journey, and as if in sympathy with our rather forlorn condition, the sky was overcast with dull, leaden clouds, while the wind whistled in a way that told of a rising storm. While recrossing the river at the little Mandan village, my lame horse lost his footing on the smooth ice, and after a struggle fell.

The difficulty of getting him on his feet again, delayed us a little; but when we reached the shelter of the bluffs, and the hard frozen crust of the snow bore up our horses, we pushed on at a good gait. By the time we got to the Red Springs we were in a regular storm and "*poudérie*," the wind dead ahead of us, and intensely cold. Not a human being was stirring in the Indian camp, and we passed through without attracting the slightest attention. But when we emerged from the shelter of the high hills, the fierce, wintry blast burst upon us with all its fury, fairly taking away our breath, and with great difficulty our horses were made to face it.

All signs of the trail were completely lost in the drifting snow; but nevertheless, my Indian guide kept on his way without an instant's hesitation. Once only, for a short time did we lose our proper direction; so terrible was the storm that the figure of my companion, though only a length ahead, was at times invisible. I drew my fox-skin cap close over my eyes, and with my capeshaw pulled over that, was well protected.

As the shades of evening gathered, the storm lulled for a while, and leaving the high prairie, our route lay through a sheltered bottom which was thickly populated by a village of prairie dogs. About ten miles below our destination we again

crossed the river, and overtook half a dozen lodges of Rees travelling up to the Gros Ventres. We were almost within sight of the forts, when the storm, as if it had gathered fresh strength by its temporary lull, commenced with renewed violence; and although we had so nearly completed our journey, it was next to impossible to proceed.

The next morning I examined my horse's foot, and found he had "snagged" himself in the sole. All efforts to extract it being unavailing, a dressing was applied and he was turned out to rest and recruit. It was not until green grass came, that suppuration set in, and the snag could be taken out, after which old "Mac" was as well as ever.

With but a single exception, that was the hardest day's travel I ever experienced; not from distance, though that was about fifty miles by the course we were compelled to take, but from the long exposure to such a terrible storm.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BUFFALO HAMSTRUNG BY WOLVES — CAMP BEGINS TO BREAK UP — HORSES STOLEN — MANDAN KILLED IN CAMP BY THE SIOUX — DARING ESCAPE — AN INDIAN HEROINE — A SEASON OF PERIL.

I FOUND on my return to the camp that the buffalo had been driven in close by the severe weather, and the Indians went out to surround almost every other day.

On one of these hunts I wounded a fat young cow, and although well-mounted, she seemed for a short time to defy the speed of my horse. As we dashed on, the cow in advance, I saw her slip and fall as she climbed a butte, and not willing to run that risk myself, I rode rapidly around it, expecting from the advantage her fall gave me, to catch her on the opposite side. My horse was at his best speed to cut her off, my pistol drawn, ready for use, when we came suddenly upon a ravine right before us. It was wide, and its depth was hard to tell, since it was nearly filled by a snow-drift. To stop in time was impossible, from the speed I was going,

so giving my horse every assistance with leg and rein, he threw his energies into the leap, and just cleared it. My pistol was still in my hand, and having taken off a mitten to use it, I found my forefinger (which had pressed against the cold iron) slightly frozen. To dismount, and restore the circulation by rubbing it with snow, was the work of a few moments, and then I galloped on after my cow, knowing she was pretty well run down by this time.

Following hard on her tracks, I at length came up with her, and was surprised beyond all expression, to find her at bay, surrounded by a gang of wolves. Some were tearing large pieces of flesh from her, as the poor animal toiled slowly and painfully on, dragging her hindquarters; for she had been hamstrung by these sneaking wretches. The blood streamed from the gaping wounds, and many of the wolves were smeared with gore.

I had read of scenes like this, and given them partial credence only; but here was the reality being enacted before me.

When I rode within a few paces, the cow bristled up, flirting her tail, and essayed a charge, but fell upon her knees. A friendly bullet cut short her misery; and taking her tongue, I rode off a short distance to watch the actions of the wolves, who,

unintimidated by my presence, could hardly be driven away. The instant my back was turned they rushed upon the body. In an incredibly short time there was but little left beside the head, and the wolves sat around, complacently licking their chops.

As a parting benediction, I favored one gentleman with a leaden pill to aid his digestion; and then rejoined the hunters who were busy butchering. My friend the Bobtail-Wolf and his relations were loading their horses, and enjoying a great luxury in the way of a piece of fresh raw liver. The blood streaming over their faces, made me think that the difference between two-legged and four-legged wolves was not so great after all.

Towards the end of February a spell of mild weather set in, the trails around the camp became wet and slushy, while the melting snow covered the ice with water. This created alarm in the minds of some of the Indians, lest by the speedy breaking up of the river, the low point upon which the camp was located might be flooded and cause destruction of property. Some of the more timid ones worked themselves into a perfect fever, and were almost afraid to sleep at night.

The mild weather had the effect of making the buffalo travel out into the "large," and moving camp was talked of in consequence. Meanwhile

the thaw continued, and there was so much water on the ice that the Indians were afraid to cross their horses. Some were in favor of going to the bluffs just back of the point, others of moving down to an eligible place midway between their present camp and the summer village. For a time no determination was reached; until one morning the Last-Stone's horses were brought up, and his women began packing their effects. By noon, he with his relations, numbering altogether some thirty or forty men, women and children, started off, announcing their intention of going down to the bad lands, and there remaining until the river should break up; when, the winter hunt being fully over, all would return to the summer village. This was the beginning of the exodus. Every day one or more families departed to join the Last-Stone, and as their deserted cabins were immediately seized for firewood, in a short time the size of the camp was perceptibly diminished, and our circle of visitors had fallen off wonderfully.

There was little or no trading going on; the snow melted rapidly, (although there was still plenty on the prairie,) and the inspiriting sound of the Indian drum was heard only at intervals. The numerous vacant places, with perhaps a chimney standing where a cabin had been, looked desolate

enough, making one regret the bustling, lively times in the early winter.

More families continued to leave, until there was not more than half the original camp remaining. The "soldiers" did not move, and the headquarters were here as long as they stayed.

An Indian arrived one day from the lower camp, and reported that ten horses had been stolen by the enemy the night before. This news caused much alarm among the Indians, and nothing would do, but all must retreat to the lower camp and join forces. The soldiers held a council, and harangued that none should move away, under penalty of having their property cut to pieces, and perhaps their horses killed. This effectually put a stop to any further stampeding, and the horse-guards exercised redoubled vigilance.

Fresh meat began to get scarce again, and the Indians were loth to break in upon their dried stores.

Another hunt was therefore arranged, comprising all the able-bodied warriors, and leaving no one behind but the women, children, and superannuated men.

Now was a time of great tribulation; suppose the camp should be attacked while its defenders were away? The people were in constant terror;

my spy-glass would be borrowed a dozen times a day, by somebody who imagined he had "seen something;" and there were certainly few who slept at night without having at least one eye and ear open. This delectable state of affairs was much increased by the arrival in the night of a couple of messengers from the Riccarees, who came in hot haste to say that the Tobacco, a Mandan, while quietly going from one camp to the other, a distance perhaps of two or three hundred yards, was shot down by a war-party of Sioux, who, with a yell of defiance, made good their escape.

The camp was instantly aroused, and a party mounted and took the trail. When the messengers left, they had not returned, and strong hopes were indulged that they had been successful in overtaking their hated foe and inflicting terrible vengeance.

This startling news created a profound sensation, and comments were freely exchanged among young and old. The daring of the Sioux was beyond all precedent; to attack and kill in the very heart as it were of their enemy's camp, within sight and hearing of hundreds of their mortal foes. "What would they do next?" Every one asked this question of himself.

After this there was no running from lodge to lodge; when darkness came, all kept within doors, though not without a strong feeling of appre-

hension. The squaws barricaded the entrances with firewood and lumber, to prevent their being rudely opened, for a feeling of insecurity was ever present in the minds of all. No one ventured far from the encampment, and further intelligence from the Rees was eagerly awaited.

We afterwards learned that the pursuing party followed the Sioux beyond the forks of Knife River, when a snow-storm set in, blinding the tracks, and compelled them to give up the chase after travelling nearly twenty hours. At one time they were so near that they could see the buffalo dividing on either side as the Sioux made their way through them. So hot was the pursuit that the Sioux had not made a *single halt* from the moment they commenced their retreat. There were but two of them, and this very fact contributed to their escape.

The Rees returned in moody temper, and breathing vows of vengeance, with their horses badly used up. Another large party immediately started out, determined not to come back until they had accomplished something.

Among them was a young Riccaree squaw, whose husband had been killed some time since in battle. This heroine announced her intention of going on the war-path, and marrying the first of the party who should strike or kill a foe. The Tobacco was a very quiet Indian, and a universal favorite among

his companions. He very rarely came around the whites unless he had something to trade. His skin was much fairer than the generality of Indians, and his hair had a yellowish tinge. Many said he was a half-breed, and he certainly looked like one. As is generally the case, the quiet and inoffensive Indians are picked off, and the rascals live on and flourish.

More pleasant, spring-like weather prevailed, and the Indians began to be uneasy again lest the river should suddenly break its icy fetters and overflow their camp. Removing was a subject of constant discussion, and everything pertaining to the chase was totally lost sight of. The band of soldiers decided not to join the lower camp, but to move out to the hills, where they would have the same advantages of pasturage and game which they had enjoyed throughout the winter. In a few days the cabins were deserted, and the skin lodges pitched on the prairie at the edge of the bluffs, about a mile distant. The squaws took advantage of the fine weather to dress as many skins as possible before returning to the summer village.

Several horses were stolen, but they belonged to Indians who had incautiously left them out all night. The snow was rapidly disappearing, and it was the season when war-parties might be expected to hover around; untiring watchfulness was therefore necessary.

CHAPTER XXV.

SKIN LODGES — NARROW ESCAPE FROM A WAR-PARTY — FINAL BREAKING UP OF THE WINTER CAMP — SCENES ON THE ROAD — HOME AGAIN — END OF THE WINTER HUNT.

IT was now the latter end of March. The buffalo were getting poor in flesh, as it was near the time to calve. The hair on their skins was becoming loose, and falling off where the animals rubbed themselves, making what is known as a spotted robe, and of far less value than one killed in the depth of winter, when the hair is firm and black. The horses also were well run down, and many which had been prime runners in the fall were now hardly able to "catch a cow," although the speed of the latter, as might naturally be supposed, was greatly reduced. The women had a comparatively easy time, for the skin lodges did not require much fuel to make them comfortable.

We lay encamped in this manner almost four weeks. The weather was occasionally quite spring-like, and then again cold and stormy, with heavy

falls of snow. At times there would be so much water on the ice that no Indian would venture to cross, and perhaps in a few days it would be frozen seemingly as hard as in midwinter.

Whenever there was an air-hole of any magnitude, crowds of both sexes would resort to it for a bath, sublimely indifferent to the chilling state of the water and atmosphere. These hardy people seem perfectly insensible to cold; their constant exposure from infancy upwards rendering their bodies as callous as their faces. A Mandan, the Big-Left-Hand, told me that, when a comparatively young man, he could hunt the buffalo on horseback in the coldest weather, with no other protection than a breechcloth.

Having occasion to make another trip to the fort, I started early in the morning with a voyageur of the American Fur Company, who was going down to Fort Berthold. We travelled rapidly, and when within a mile or so of the lower camp, (though it was out of sight among the Mauvaises Terres,) we dismounted to rest. We could plainly see the Indian horses feeding among the hills, and when after resuming our saddles, we came in sight of the lodges, a great commotion was evident. Mounted Indians galloped to and fro, gathering up their horses and hurrying

them into camp, and as we drew near, the warriors dashed past us in full battle-array.

A few words explained everything. While we were quietly resting on the ridge, a small war-party of Sioux, five in all, were stealthily approaching us under cover of a ravine, and were preparing to fire, when they were discovered by the scouts from the Gros Ventre camp. The alarm was instantly signalled, resulting, as we have seen, in the gathering in of the horses, and the starting out of the warriors. Finding themselves discovered, the Sioux, knowing that immediate pursuit would take place, retreated precipitately; while we, unconscious of our narrow escape, leisurely remounted our horses and continued on our way, until we met the Indians hurrying forth.

We remained in camp all night, to learn the result of the pursuit. The following forenoon the warriors returned, having followed the tracks a long distance, until they feared from the direction that they might fall into an ambuscade, and concluded to abandon the chase. We then proceeded on our journey, and arrived at the fort without further adventure.

Upon my return to camp I found that the soldiers, after a consultation, had harangued to move in three days, and every one was busied with preparations. The teams had been sent from the fort to

move down all the goods, peltries, and other "plunder" remaining on hand, and now, that uncertainty as to their future movements was at an end, a better feeling prevailed among the Indians.

On the day appointed to move camp, the squaws were early astir; horses were driven up and saddled, and all awaited the order to pull down the lodges.

One by one started off and took up the line of march, which was headed by the Poor-Wolf, who "carried the pipe" on this occasion. Soon all were in motion, pressing forward with glee, amid the incidents peculiar to an Indian camp on the march.

The gay young "*bannerets*" caracoled about on their fancy horses, and seemed to enjoy greatly this opportunity of displaying themselves. Sometimes the load of a pack-horse would become disarranged, when off he would go, plunging and kicking, followed by two or three squaws, whose shrill exclamations of anger were ill calculated to quiet him. Then again would occur a *mêlée*, in which fifty or a hundred dogs, harnessed to their *travées*, participated, to the great detriment of their loads, but very little to their own, the harness and *travées* protecting them. These combats would be as suddenly ended by the squaws rushing in among them and dealing their blows right and left, changing the fierce snarls to a succession of deprecatory yells and cries.

Our second day's march led us through a rolling prairie, and along the ridge, almost within sight of the winter-quarters formerly occupied by a portion of the camp. But no horses were feeding among the hills, no smoke curling up from the lodges floated softly in the air. The camp was deserted, and its occupants had gone to the summer village, where we were soon to join them.

We camped that evening on a little creek, called by the Indians, Blue Water. Fuel was plenty, and the pasturage so luxuriant that our horses did not wander off a hundred yards.

A spark from one of the fires, wafted by the air, kindled the dry grass into a flame, and fanned by the wind it blazed furiously on every side.

Quick as thought the alarm was given, and every one rushed forth to fight the fire with whatever happened to be at hand. One picked up a robe, another a blanket, a third an apishamore, others trampled it out with their feet; while several squaws used large pieces of dry meat, which they were preparing for the kettles, with excellent effect. The flames were soon extinguished by these combined and vigorous exertions. In a few seconds more the fire would have spread beyond control, and the whole camp have been laid in ashes. The grass was as dry and inflammable as tinder, and when

once under headway, would have burnt furiously. This excitement having subsided, quiet reigned once more, but the night was not suffered to pass without further alarms.

The whole camp was thrown into sudden commotion by the rapid discharge of two or three guns, followed by an attempted stampede of the horses; several broke from their fastenings and rushed through the camp, but were luckily stopped and secured. The women and dogs added the music of their voices to the general clamor, and for a short time the confusion was indescribable. When quiet was restored, it was ascertained that nothing was missing, although one of the young men who fired the alarm, confidently declared that he had seen something creeping through a cooley towards some horses.

No reconnoissance was attempted, for it would have been madness, if not impracticable, and a posture of defence was maintained until daylight, when hostile footprints were discovered crossing the bed of the creek. No enemy being in sight, however, the horses were released from their fastenings, and the camp fell into its regular routine.

While descending the slope leading into the timbered bottom below the village, a bull was discovered, and successfully run by nearly one half the mounted

men, who appeared to enter into the fun with all their hearts. As we entered the trail through the timber, each one seemed animated by a desire to press forward as quickly as possible, and, as a natural consequence, collisions and jars in the dense thickets were of constant occurrence.

Soon the gay cavalcade emerged from the forest glades, and crossed the broad sand-bar left bare by the receding waters of the previous autumn; and climbing up the steep bluff upon which their village was built, were once again at home, in their favorite summer haunt.

The dull monotony that had ruled since their departure in the fall, was at an end. Droves of horses scattered forth on the prairies, and the rival forts were thronged with crowds of visitors, each one intent on getting a cup of coffee in the Indian room, according to the usual custom when they returned from winter-quarters.

The busy squaws were hard at work, putting the large, round dirt lodges in habitable order, carrying firewood, and cooking.

Their lords and masters, after watering and driving the horses out upon the prairie, sauntered from one fort to the other, and from lodge to lodge, eating their fill, and spending their time in royal ease.

The Winter Hunt was at an end.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SPRING — MAKING PACKS — DANCING — BUFFALO EVERYWHERE — MEDICINE PICTURES — ASSINNIBOINES ON THE WAR-PATH — A SUCCESSFUL PARTISAN — KINDLING THE WAR-SPIRIT — GRIM MEETING OF HOSTILE INDIANS — WILD FOWL — BREAKING UP OF THE ICE — EXCITING SCENES.

SPRING had come. The Indians had made an excellent hunt, and we expected to have in consequence a very good trade. But the squaws were so busy repairing their dirt lodges, in addition to their ordinary domestic duties, that they had as yet dressed but few robes, except those which they traded to supply immediate wants. But, upon the strength of what they would do when their robes were dressed, the men lounged between the two forts, begging all they could from one Company, and threatening in case of refusal to give their patronage to the other.

Every Indian who had any robes at his disposal, was therefore courted and treated with the greatest consideration. Each morning a large camp-kettle, full of well-boiled coffee and liberally sweetened,

was set out in the Indian room, with an accompanying pan of small biscuit, each about the size of a Spanish dollar. To each one that came in was given a biscuit, and a tin-cup full of the beverage; and if desirable to pay special attention, he was invited into the Bourgeois' room, where his cup of coffee was infinitely more worthy of the name, and the biscuit considerably larger.

This daily morning reception took place at both Posts, and, as may well be imagined, was extensively attended by the notabilities of the Minnetaree camp. The sum and substance of their conversation was "mahts-ee-quoah," (sugar,) and how many cups of it they could get for a robe.

The first thing I heard after the gates were opened, was the inquiry if the "mahts-ee-quoah" was ready, and the last thing before closing them for the night was "mahts-ee-quoah."

McBride lost all patience at this state of affairs. "D—— these Indians," he would say, "it's setoh-minne mahts-ee-quoah" (sugar all the time with them).

The weather was cold and the river still frozen, although there was plenty of water on the ice. But the wild fowl commencing to fly northward, gave assurance that spring was at hand, and on all the lakes and creeks around, the shooting was capital.

We were busy for several days in making packs; *i. e.*, tying up our robes and peltries into bales, for shipment to the States. Ten buffalo robes are put into a pack, and securely tied with cords cut out of a raw hide. Wolf, fox, elk, deer, and beaver skins are also tied into packs, containing various numbers according to size.

We were also occupied in salting and curing the remainder of the buffalo tongues on hand, and packing them up into barrels.

The Indians gambled as vigorously as ever, and many robes and guns, and sometimes horses, changed hands in the course of the day. The various bands or societies had also their season of dances. That galaxy of beauty, the Wild-Goose band, was the first to indulge in a *fête champêtre*, which example was quickly followed by the others.

Some of the dances were wild and very picturesque, that of the Lance Band in particular, being composed of warriors in the prime of life, splendidly arrayed, with bonnets or head-dresses of war-eagle feathers, and bearing lances decorated with plumes, and pennons of scarlet and blue cloth. They of course paid us a visit, and danced in the fort, singing and firing off their fusees in the air. A present was given them after the dance was finished, as is the custom.

The "Strong Hearts" also took an opportunity to display themselves; conspicuous among them was my friend Doctor E-ten-ah-pen-ah, who, dressed and painted in a style indescribably grotesque, enacted his part as if the whole burden of success rested upon his shoulders. He wore a number of small wood shavings stained with vermilion in his hair, each the symbol of a wound received.

Every time a dance came off in the fort, a present was given or thrown to the participants, whereupon they danced more vigorously, and redoubled their shouts and yells; and as these festivities were of daily occurrence, our liberality was heavily taxed.

Horse-racing in the evenings became again the popular amusement. On one occasion a difficulty arose as to the allotment of the stakes, and from words they came to blows, until finally one of the disputants put an arrow through the heart of the winning horse. This act made a great talk in the village, but as the aggressor belonged to a powerful clan, the insult was suffered to pass by without further notice.

The next day not a vestige of the horse remained, the dogs having enjoyed a grand feast during the night.

As if by magic, one morning the vast expanse of prairie on the opposite side of the river was dis-

covered to be, as the Indians expressed it, "Black everywhere with a terrible plenty of buffalo." Some of the herds came down to the very edge of the timber, and every one rejoiced at the sight. The soldiers harangued in the village to stop all unnecessary noise, and get ready for the surround.

The houses in the fort were patronized by the idlers, who discussed the appearance of the buffalo, and speculated upon it in their own deliberate way. It was not policy to object to this wholesale invasion of our quarters, for they regarded the traders simply in the light of a convenience, eagerly seeking for the very articles which these lords of the forest and prairie had no use for. They could not wear all the skins their women dressed, nor could they eat them. If the traders were not here to buy them, giving in exchange blankets and cloth and other desirable luxuries, they would have to leave them on the prairie. And by sitting around the huge blazing fires in the houses of the whites, they saved fuel in their own lodges, and spared the squaws the labor of carrying so much firewood. Moreover the pipes of chash-hash-ash they so freely indulged in, cost them nothing; therefore entertaining these ideas, it was hardly a matter of surprise that they looked upon the fort as greatly honored by their presence.

The Indian room was particularly favored, and as the Interpreter in charge was exceedingly averse to this state of affairs, and was at no pains to conceal his dislike, the young bucks especially found great delight in purposely tormenting him. My room was the headquarters of many of the principal men; Old Raising-Heart, the Bobtail-Wolf, Snakeskin, the Hawk, and Doctor E-ten-ah-pen-ah were regularly in attendance.

My comrade, the Bobtail-Wolf, continued his lessons in the language, repeating over and over words and phrases until I had got them correctly and written them down, to his intense satisfaction and the astonishment of the rest of my red-skinned friends. After an animated conversation, (almost always enlivened by a cup of coffee,) the *cotêrie* would disperse to attend to their horses, or some public business in the village. The Bobtail-Wolf usually remained behind to enjoy a quiet sleep, and should I have occasion to leave my house, sometimes for hours, the old gentleman would always stay to do the honors to any visitors dropping in. The greatest treat I could give my friend, was a large pan of bouillon, or broth, in which fresh meat had been boiled, well seasoned with salt and pepper, to which latter condiment he was especially partial.

I had decorated the log walls of my room with

several colored prints representing buffalo hunts, which were a source of great interest to my visitors. Everything was carefully and truthfully criticised; any defect in attitude or shape; any error of costume or weapons; all these little minutiæ were regularly and accurately commented on.

Often was I importuned to sell these pictures, but I objected, for they seemed a connecting link between the refinements of civilization and the roughness of savage life. When the buffalo made their appearance, as before related, in such prodigious numbers, I said that I knew they were coming, that my pictures were strong medicine, and so long as I kept them on the walls, buffalo would be close and plenty. This announcement made quite a sensation among my hearers, and the virtues of my pictures were at once admitted.

The "surround" was made, the Indians crossing over on the ice, which was still strong enough to bear them, except at the banks, where an open strip of a few yards often caused a great deal of trouble. The heavily laden pack-horses would struggle fearfully and sometimes have to be unloaded before they could be extricated. The buffalo remained for several weeks apparently as plenty as ever; but after a few surrounds, the crossing became so bad that many hunters would not risk their horses, and

a regularly organized system was accordingly abandoned, all being at liberty to hunt as they pleased. Many crossed over, and "approached" with great success. One of these small parties returned early in the morning in hot haste, and recrossed with the utmost celerity.

They reported having discovered a party of Sioux making their way towards the timber, evidently with the intention of laying in ambush for some one of the many hunters that were constantly straggling through the forest.

Avoiding them by a *détour*, they arrived first at the river, and crossing, gave the alarm. In an instant the excitement in the village was terrible, and the warriors were soon armed and on the ice, disappearing in a dense body through the timber.

A short interval of anxious suspense ensued, when the silence was broken by the rattling of arms, and all the yells and cries that accompany an Indian battle. Expectation was raised to the highest pitch, when suddenly the warriors appeared on the bar, escorting a small party of men in white blanket capotes. Almost everybody rushed down to the landing-place to receive them, and as they drew near they proved to be a portion of a large Assinniboine war-party against the Oncpapas and Blackfeet. They had been detached from the

main body to bring to the Gros Ventre village one of their number, who had been taken sick and was unfit for continuing on the war-path. The firing, &c., was therefore intended merely as a salute to the strangers, who were invited into the lodges, and treated with all possible hospitality. They said that over three hundred lodges of Assinniboines, Crees, and a few Chippeways were coming down to the Gros Ventres when the green grass came, to unite with them in making the great Sun Medicine. The Sioux had been harassing their camp (just below the mouth of the Yellowstone) all winter, and had recently made an attack by which they had lost seven of their warriors, and had a number severely wounded, but still able to make their escape.

The excitement that attended the arrival of these warriors was not suffered to die out; for the next afternoon two more of the party who had gone on, arrived in great glee, with three horses and a colt they had stolen. They reported that the number of Sioux lodges in the bad lands of Heart River was "terrible"—all the horses tied close at night, and every precaution taken to avoid surprise. Just as they were about to give up their attempt in despair, they came upon three lodges a little apart from the main body, and were fortunate enough to

steal the horses. The rest of the party (from whom they had separated) had not been seen, and they could not afford to lose any time in hunting them up. The prairie had been set on fire by the Sioux, and the fate of their comrades was very uncertain. The Assinniboines made a very short stay, and hurried on to their camp, now supposed to be on White River.

Two others arrived before night, without any spoils or any tidings of their companions; but early the following day the three remaining Assinniboines appeared in great triumph, driving before them eleven fine horses in excellent condition. There were now only two more of the party to be accounted for, and there seemed hardly a possibility of their escape.

The successful partisan of this foray was quite a young, handsome fellow, dressed, as is the usual custom when going to war, in a white blanket capote and capeshaw. As he proudly ascended the bank, his horses led, and weapons carried, by officious friends, gazed at admiringly by all the young squaws, envy was rife in the breasts of the Minnetaree warriors, who now burned to distinguish themselves on the war-path. War was indeed in every one's head, and nothing but war-parties was thought of or talked about. Pierre Garreau, who

had been unceasingly urging upon the young men to avenge his sons' death, and wipe out the insult offered to their people, and had got no satisfaction but promises, now found the tide of public feeling turned on war, with a force and fury he had little anticipated. After giving a couple of their horses to the Gros Ventres, the successful warriors started for their camp, but it seemed that the blaze which was now burning fiercely should suffer no diminution.

The same evening a party of thirty-eight Assiniboines arrived, with proposals that the Gros Ventres should unite with them in a general war against the Sioux. Hardly had they told their tale, ere the remaining two, who had been given up for lost, came in, completely jaded and worn-out. They also had been fortunate in stealing five horses the *night after* the eleven were taken, when the Sioux were exercising their utmost vigilance. But so sharp was the pursuit that they were compelled to abandon their spoils; and so close upon them were the Sioux at one time, that they could hear them calling from one to another, "Where are the dogs that eat dirt?" They secreted themselves in a hole, and remained there all that night and the next day, but succeeded the following evening in eluding their foes and effecting their escape.

While the buffalo were so near, the hunters determined upon having one more surround before the breaking up of the river.

They crossed in the afternoon, intending to bivouac on the other side, and have their horses fresh for the hunt in the morning.

The next day there was an alarm of Sioux, and for a short time the usual confusion prevailed; but the matter was partially explained when the hunters made their appearance on the bar, and prepared to recross, having abandoned the idea of hunting. Two Sioux from the Oncpapa camp were with them. It seems that a son of the Crow's-Breast, while taking his horses to pasture, found a couple of Indians sleeping. The tramp of hoofs aroused them, and they sprang to their feet and called out to him. But he, mortally scared, ran back whooping and yelling to the hunters, who, rushing forward, discovered their error. They came to the Gros Ventres from their own camp at the forks of Knife River, to ascertain where was the camp of the Assinniboines who had stolen their horses. Finding a fat cow the afternoon previous, badly wounded with an arrow, they killed her for meat. This detained them so late that they slept in the timber, not caring about entering the village at night. The Sioux were received, belonging as they did to the Oncpapas,

who were on friendly terms, with all hospitality. The Gros Ventres showed their appreciation of the rights of neutrals, by preventing any demonstration by either Sioux or Assinniboines, who scowled at each other when they met, but attempted no violence. The Oncpapas however gave the Assinniboines to understand that a large war-party, consisting of nearly all the fighting-men, would take the field immediately on their return, and that they would "rub out" the whole Assinniboine camp. This put the latter in an immense excitement, and they were in the utmost hurry to get back as soon as possible, and give the alarm, that they could retrace their steps to the heart of their own country for safety.

Taking advantage of the excitement in the village, a war-party of eight Gros Ventres under the Round-Man as partisan, stole off in the dead of night, against the orders of the soldier band.

The two Sioux remained a day, and then returned to their own camp, saying that a large party might be expected in to trade after the river broke, which from the quantity of water on the ice, and the general thaw that had set in, could not be far off.

The wild fowl in immense numbers began to fly north, a sure sign that the icy grasp of winter would soon be loosed. The next day the river com-

menced rising with great rapidity, and there was so much water now on the ice that it was impossible to cross.

In the afternoon of the second day the ice commenced breaking up, and moved down several hundred yards, when it formed a gorge and stuck fast, but the river rising rapidly, bid fair to start it again in a few hours.

Everybody had been watching for its first movement, and when the dull, crushing sound that accompanied it struck the ear, the excitement and joy were universal. The men in the fort dropped their work and rushed to the river's brink, along with hundreds of Indians; while the tops of the lodges were crowded with eager, excited groups, and the dogs of course testified their entire approbation by prolonged and vigorous howls.

By nightfall the gorge broke, and the ice rushed by, whirling, crushing, and grinding in huge cakes and masses, intermixed with floating tree-tops, and logs of all shapes and sizes.

Through the night the sullen noise, as of distant thunder, continued, and morning revealed the river full from bank to bank, and running by with impetuous current.

It was a strange and interesting sight, and one could spend hours along the bank watching the

rush of waters, the floating cakes of ice, and the whirling logs, carried off from sand-bars where they had been snugly reposing since the fall of the flood in the previous summer, now for hundreds of miles to be bruised by constant contact with the ice, until battered and almost shapeless, they would be borne upon distant waters.

The graceful regularity with which the vast floating fields of ice followed the bends of the river, and the glittering of the sun's rays upon their surface, were well worth watching.

Young Indians, out of bravado, just before the river finally gave way, sprang on the moving masses of ice, and leaped from one to another, until they gained the shore; others plunged into the chilling water where an eddy was comparatively free, while others again fired their guns and joined in the general outcry.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ARRIVAL OF THE SPRING EXPRESS — COLD SWIM — WINDS — ON THE WAR-PATH — HORSES STOLEN — DRESSING ROBES — COMPETITION — BLACKFOOT CHIEFTAIN — PRAIRIES ON FIRE — DENSE SMOKE — DANCE OF THE CALUMET.

THE arrival of Major Clark from his Post among the Blackfeet Indians, with the Company's Express for St. Louis, was the next event after the breaking up of the river. He had a comfortable, covered Mackinaw boat, forty feet in length, with a crew of ten men, and was running day and night. The Major remained with us only long enough to get the news at the Post, and examine into the state of the trade, with a view to making up the outfit for the ensuing year, to be brought up on the annual steamboat.

The principal chiefs of the Blackfeet sent an invitation through him to the Gros Ventres to meet them in friendly council at the mouth of Milk River.

After staying a little over an hour, Major Clark continued his voyage, his stout oarsmen plying their long sweeps vigorously, and running their frail

barge through the ice at the rate of fully fifteen miles an hour. By the next day the river had fallen several feet, and was comparatively free from ice. Drowned buffaloes floated by, and two young men swam out after one, and succeeded in landing it upon a point of the sand-bar, fully a mile below the village, where they proceeded to butcher it, without appearing in the least inconvenienced by their chilling swim.

The early spring weather was exceedingly disagreeable. With an occasional clear, calm day, for over six weeks storms prevailed; the wind usually commenced blowing at sunrise, and only lulled at nightfall, filling the air with fine particles from the extensive sand-bars opposite the village. All day the wind beat against the pickets of the fort with such tremendous force as to incline them considerably from the perpendicular. Often would the sand be driven in such clouds that it was impossible to see a dozen yards. At such times no work could be accomplished, and everybody stayed within doors, even the Indians keeping close to their lodges.

It was during a storm of this kind that a very large war-party of Yanctohwah Sioux ran off a band of nearly two hundred horses from the Rees, embracing many of the very finest in the village,

and thus struck a blow which crippled them seriously for a long time. I was in the camp a few days after their loss, and it was pitiable to see the straits to which many were reduced for food. Those who had horses shared the proceeds of their hunt with those who had none; some families had but one or two remaining out of a large band, and with all their exertions, a surround barely furnished a full meal to each dweller in the camp. I was with them three days, and felt quite satisfied to get one scanty meal per diem.

Out on the prairie, a couple of miles from the river, the wind was as strong as elsewhere, but without the annoyances of sand. It was far pleasanter to remain there among the horse-guards than to stay within doors; for the sand drove through the gaping chinks of the logs, and covered everything with a thick, substantial coating of dust, which put any approach to personal comfort out of the question.

After the usual amount of preparation, two parties, comprising in all about sixty warriors, were ready for the war-path. The largest one, under the leadership of the Red-Tail, intended to cross the river and strike through the Sioux country until they reached Fort Pierre, where they had hopes of cutting off some of the lodges of Sioux

always encamped in that vicinity. The other, under the First-Feather, was to keep on this side of the river, on the lookout for the camps of Yanctohwahs generally to be found there in the summer.

Trade went on very briskly; the squaws were dressing and bartering their robes as fast as possible, and the men were supplying themselves with everything necessary to fit them for war. White blankets (to make capotes) were in the greatest demand, and so unusual was the rush for them that we began to fear we would not have enough left for the Sioux trade, their fancy also running on white, which is the favorite color for war-parties. Hitherto, scarlet and blue blankets had been the rage, but they were now not even looked at.

Guns and ammunition were of course in request, and instead of the usual listless idling around, or the evening promenade and equestrian exercises of the young bucks, nothing was heard but the trumpet-cry of war. Those who were too old to go, exerted themselves to fan the martial spirit of the young men, and one and all seemed fully imbued with the prevailing excitement.

Party after party started off, and there was a very perceptible diminution of men in the village, to be still further reduced when the principal expedition of the season should take the field. This was to

comprise the very flower of the village, men who had often and successfully trodden the war-path; and the fact of the Four-Bears intending to accompany it, inspired those who were a little doubtful with fresh courage.

It now became a serious question whether there would be fighting-men enough left in camp to guard it; and the old Dry-Pumpkin was already going about, haranguing not to leave the women and children unprotected. So thoroughly was everybody imbued with the fighting mania that even the Gambler, whose life was perfectly blameless of any attempt to take human blood, declared his intention of going, an announcement that caused more surprise and remark than any yet made. A scarred and war-worn veteran, the Wolf's-Eye, was to be the partisan; he carried the pipe; and no matter what member of the party stole a horse, or "counted a coup," the partisan received the credit, for it was through his medicine that the deed was done.

An interval of comparative quiet followed; much was to be done in the coming moon; the Oncpapas and Blackfeet would be in to trade, and returning war-parties might be looked for at any moment. We were very busy between building a boat to cross the trading-parties of Sioux when they should come

in, erecting a bastion for the defence of our post, and clearing up the rubbish that had necessarily accumulated during the winter.

The snow had entirely disappeared, except in a few sheltered places among the hills, and the Indian women were gathering willows to repair the fences around their cornfields, preparatory to breaking the ground for the coming crop.

The camp was still abundantly supplied with meat, so there was no necessity (and very little inclination, if the truth were known) for the hunters to go out. Every bright sunny day groups of women were scattered over the prairie close to the pickets of the village, with their children playing near them and their dogs of course lying around, dressing and preparing their robes, either for domestic use or trade. Those for themselves were dressed as soft and white as possible, while very little pains was taken with the skins intended for the traders. So keen was the rivalry between the American Fur Company and the Opposition, that anything with hair on, from an apishamore up, was eagerly taken, and helped to swell the number of packs.

There is a great deal of work to be done before a buffalo-robe is fit for use. When it is in a green (or raw) state, it is stretched on a frame of poles, roughly but strongly lashed together in a corner of

the lodge, and the flesh adhering is carefully scraped off. It is then left to dry, when it is taken down and put away until wanted; for during the busy hunting-season it is as much as a squaw can do to flesh the robes without finishing them. When the hide is to be dressed, it is laid upon the ground, and "scratched" with a sharpened piece of hoop-iron, tied to an elkhorn for a handle; this leaves it in a condition to be "brained," *i. e.*, sprinkled with water, and then well smeared over with buffalo brains and grease. After being thoroughly dried, it is rubbed on a cord of twisted sinew, which makes it soft and pliable. The two sides are then sewed together with sinew, and the robe is ready to be traded. From every robe, before sewing it, the squaws cut a strip down each half, the length of the skin, and about twelve inches wide. When a sufficient number accumulates, these pieces are sewed together and used for beds, apishamores, etc., of course reducing the size of the skin very considerably.

The camp was thrown into a great state of excitement by the unexpected arrival of a small boat from Fort Union, bringing the White-Calf-that-disappears, Chief of the Blood Indians, a band of the Blackfeet. He was splendidly dressed, and had a magnificent bonnet of war-eagle feathers, falling to his feet;

and was accompanied by his squaw, a fine-looking woman.

He had intended to await at Fort Union the arrival of the American Fur Company's steamboat, and greet his brother-in-law, the well-known Major Culbertson; but Mr. Kipp the Bourgeois, fearing trouble from the Crows encamped close by, sent his distinguished guest to Fort Berthold, where he would be comparatively safe. The bustle attending his arrival was not suffered to subside, for that night fourteen horses were stolen, and the next, twenty-three more, showing conclusively that if their war-parties had gone forth, the Sioux were not a whit behind; and great was the panic. The camp was harangued to have the pickets strengthened and filled up, and the Poor-Wolf, as head of the soldier band, going his rounds to see that these orders were obeyed, knocked down with his tomahawk several women who did not seem disposed to heed them.

The dry rushes in the prairie bottom had been set on fire, and were burning steadily, threatening to spread far and wide. This was a fresh cause of alarm, for by the destruction of their pasturage the Indians would be compelled to drive their horses to a great distance, thereby increasing the risk of their capture. The fire burned on, sometimes feebly struggling for existence in the short crisp grass of

the prairie, but blazing furiously in the dry rushes around the lakes and streams.

In the course of two or three days the whole country seemed wrapped in flames on both sides of the river; and its appearance at night, viewed from the bastion, was beautiful in the extreme. A high wind prevailed, and the flames climbed over the buttes, and rushed through the long grass bottoms with lightning speed, leaving behind them in the black and smoking prairie a sad scene of desolation. The whole atmosphere was filled with smoke, at times so dense that it was impossible to see any distance, although the fire was by that time many miles away. While the prairies were burning close to us, I rode out to look up a couple of horses that had strayed off from the band, and in the course of my hunt was obliged to cross the line of fire. Fortunately the grass on the hills was short, and burned slowly; and after several unsuccessful attempts to force my horse over, I threw my blanket over his head, and covering my powder-horn with the skirt of my hunting-shirt, crossed the flames.

The burning would facilitate the sprouting of the green grass, and had the excellent effect of causing several copious showers. After each of these, while it was clearing, some of the young men would start off on a foot-race, naked to the clout, amid yells and firing of guns.

Notwithstanding all the wars and rumors of wars, the Indians did not neglect making important "medicines." The Bobtail-Wolf and his father-in-law, old Missouri, danced around the village, the old man wearing a robe and mask to represent a buffalo. In whatever lodge they danced, it was expected that something would be "thrown" or given to the "medicine;" and whoever did this, received in return from the bull, a pan of toro or pemmican. This medicine was for the purpose of bringing buffalo, by which the old Missouri's family should be immediately benefited.

The Long-Hair was also preparing to dance the Calumet or Pipe of Peace to the Red-Cow. The whole camp talked about it: the Long-Hair bustled around, buying ribbons and beads to garnish the stem of the Pipe of Peace, and making every possible preparation to give *éclat* to the ceremony. The Red-Cow remained within his lodge, assisting his meditations by smoking abundance of "Kinne-kinik." The young men watched the proceedings attentively, the young squaws put an extra touch of vermilion on their cheeks; while the principal men made medicine to decide the auspicious time for this most important ceremony.

Finally the day was chosen. About noon the Bad-Brave and Joint appeared on the roof of the

Long-Hair's lodge, dressed and painted with the strictest regard for the occasion.

Chanting an invocation to the Great Spirit, and shaking their medicine-rattles, they waved the Calumets with their sky-blue stems beautifully garnished, and war-eagle feathers fluttering from them. They made their medicine, first to the rising, and then to the setting sun; after which they descended from the lodge and went inside.

At the farthest extremity of the spacious earth-covered lodge, four of the principal men in the village, the Poor-Wolf, Crow's-Breast, Bear-Hunter, and Little-Fox, were singing and drumming with untiring vigor. Before each were placed some medicine-sticks. The Bad-Brave and Joint danced, waving the Calumets and shaking the rattles; the Long-Hair sat by the fire in the centre, over which a kettle of buffalo-meat was cooking, smoking; and as the fragrant smoke of the "kinne-kinik" was blown in clouds from his mouth and nostrils, he expressed his complete satisfaction with everything, by the simple monosyllable, "How!" At stated intervals the invocation from the top of the lodge was repeated. These ceremonies continued four days.

On the afternoon of the fifth day the important finale took place. After the invocation from the top of the lodge and the dance inside, all adjourned

to the prairie, carrying two buffalo-skulls painted with vermilion. Seating themselves in a row, the musicians sang and drummed, and the pipe was passed around.

When it was smoked out, the party repaired to the lodge of the Little-Left-Hand. It was crowded with as many as could be accommodated without infringing on the space required for dancing.

The oldest man and the oldest woman in the camp were there, as well as children in arms.

There was no crowding; no ugly bonnets or huge fans getting continually in the line of vision; all respected the place, all were perfectly quiet, save when some young and pretty squaw happened to be squeezed a little in passing through the crowd of plumed and painted braves around the door.

By the politeness of the Little-Left-Hand I had a luxurious seat on a pile of robes, in the midst of the principal men, close by the musicians, with the Long-Hair on my right.

After an introductory song and dance, a deputation, including the musicians, went to conduct the Red-Cow to the lodge. In a short time they returned, and the procession marched several times around the fireplace in the following order:

The Long-Hair; the two dancers, each carrying a Calumet; Red-Cow, looking fully conscious of the

honor paid him, yet trying to maintain a proper expression of countenance, supported on either side by the Four-Times and the Bobtail-Wolf; next came his family and relations; the musicians brought up the rear.

After they were seated at the head of the lodge the music commenced, the Bad-Brave sprang to his feet shaking his rattle and waving his Calumet, and danced with a peculiar jarring step; the Snakeskin stood up and harangued, calling upon the by-standers to throw to the Medicine. They responded by coming forward one at a time, and giving guns, blankets, calico, scarlet and blue cloth, &c. When all the presents had been given, the dancing stopped, and the crowd dispersed, while the Long-Hair began to distribute the presents he had received, among the Big-Dog Band.

This is probably one of the most important of all the dances and medicine feasts among the North American Indians. It is in fact a kind of baptism; the person thus honored being distinguished ever after. The Great Spirit is supposed to take special care of him; he will count many coups, and take many scalps in battle; will be successful in stealing numerous fine horses from his enemies, and always enjoy abundance of buffalo.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SIOUX TRADE — RETURN OF A DEFEATED WAR-PARTY — MORE REVERSES — FORTITUDE — INDIAN BELIEF — ARRIVAL OF CROWS.

A SMALL party of Sioux arrived from the Oncpapa camp. The leading men among them were the Four-Horns, Hawk-with-a-loud-voice, Yellow-Thunder, Iron-Wing, War-Eagle-that-flies-in-the-air, and Heart-of-Fire. They left their camp of many lodges on the forks of Knife River, about a day's journey, and said they were so loaded down with meat that they could hardly travel. Much excitement and a great deal of angry talk prevailed in their camp, at Pierre Garreau's pushing the Gros Ventres to war against the Yanctohwahs; "for," said they, "it is the same as going to war against us, for we are all one people." The Sioux said their large war-party against the Assinniboines had been deferred until they should make their trade, and the camp moved off to the Black Hills, where, far removed from the din of war, in the fastnesses of their

own country, the women and children could dwell in safety, while the warriors sought the foe.

"The Assinniboines are dogs," they said; "we will hunt them until we find them; for they cannot hide in the ground like a snake, nor in the water like a fish, nor fly in the air like a bird; they must be on the prairie, and we will find them."

A large party was coming in a few days to talk about the trade, and the Gros Ventres in the village worked themselves up into a perfect fever of alarm, lest the Sioux should take advantage of the absence of nearly all the fighting-men to wipe out old scores. They were as anxious for their warriors to return as they had been for them to go to war; but it was now too late if hostilities were designed by the Sioux.

This begging party remained two days; on the morning of the third they departed, promising that the camp would be in to trade in five or six days, which of course meant, not until they were ready, and probably as many weeks would elapse.

A party of Indians on foot was discovered a few days succeeding the above events, coming up the sand-bar quietly, as if they wished to attract as little attention as possible, but the anxious inhabitants soon divined the cause. It was one of the

war-parties that had started off not long since, eager and confident that victory would attend their arms. But they returned in mourning, having lost their partisan the First-Feather. They had long been on the lookout for the enemy, when one day they saw at a distance three buffaloes running. Halting his party, the First-Feather went ahead to reconnoitre; he had been gone but a short time when firing was heard, and his warriors rushed forward—to find their leader dead, and the gun of a Sioux lying near him. They judged by the tracks that the attacking party was about thirteen or fourteen strong. Disheartened by this unlooked-for reverse, they returned in mourning to the village.

The same evening an alarm was given that "people were coming." A forlorn and straggling party was seen approaching the village; at the head walked with feeble step and evident difficulty, the Round-man. All were in a most forlorn plight; no blankets or moccasins, in fact, nothing but their weapons and breechcloths. The whole village turned out to meet them; and as they came up, their wives and female relatives rushed to kiss them, while the friends of the slain warrior set up the mournful Indian wail of woe and despair.

Their tale was soon told. They had penetrated the Sioux country as far as Horsehead Point, near

Long Lake, below the Cannonball River, where they discovered a large camp of Yanc-toh-wahs. Around it they hovered, lying concealed by day, and prowling about in the dead of night. The inhabitants of the camp were busily engaged around a circle of fires, dancing a scalp which they had just taken, probably the First-Feather's. With infinite daring the Gros Ventre warriors stole in among the lodges and cut loose nine horses and five mules, with which they commenced their retreat. But one of the horses, a white one, escaped, and ran back to camp. This gave the alarm, resulting in a hot pursuit. The Gros Ventres retreated in a northeasterly direction, as if they were making for the Red River, thereby hoping to deceive the enemy into the belief that they were either Chippeways or half-breeds. Being hard pressed, they abandoned their horses, keeping only one apiece to ride, and threw away everything except their weapons. In the midst of their retreat they unexpectedly encountered a party of Sioux returning from an expedition against the Assinniboines. Their horses began to give out, and one of their number was shot and scalped. Nearly all were now more or less disabled; the Round-man was shot in the mouth, and wounded in three other places, and fearing he could not hold out, told his comrades to leave him

to his fate and bear witness that he died like a man. But his warriors were true and stood by him; and one by one the Sioux gave up the chase, as their horses were completely ridden down, and they had secured a scalp without any loss. Stripped of horses, blankets, and provisions, their ammunition and arrows all expended during the running fight, and crippled by wounds, the survivors kept on with true Indian fortitude; and eking out a scanty subsistence on roots and berries, arrived at last in forlorn plight at their village.

The friends and relations of the dead sat by the medicine poles on the prairie, cutting and gashing themselves, and crying to the Great Spirit.

The Bobtail-Wolf told me that the First-Feather had been making medicine, and crying to the Great Spirit all winter; even promising to give a robe in event of success in war. He made two cardinal errors, my informant said: First, in promising the robe after crying all winter; and secondly, in not giving it before he started.

These unexpected reverses cast quite a gloom over the village; the warriors stalked moodily about with downcast glances, and the chiefs held solemn conclave in the council-lodge.

Meanwhile every day or so there would be arrivals from the Sioux. The camp itself came in sight

one afternoon, numbering several hundred lodges, and pitched in the prairie bottom, just beyond the timber.

Very little trade of course was done the first day, which was one of general visiting. As several of the Sioux were to dance the Calumet to the Gros Ventres, it of course engrossed a great deal of their attention.

The Sioux came over early, and traded actively until they were stopped by the soldiers from bringing any more robes, hoping thus to induce the traders to cross the river with a view to robbing them. They found however that this artifice would not succeed, and allowed matters to go on as before.

The traffic over, they departed to join the other division, trading with the Rees. They proposed to rendezvous at the forks of Knife River, and then move out to the Thin Hills. In spite of their threatening talk, the Sioux traded comparatively little ammunition.

Beyond all doubt, had we crossed the river, we would have been robbed, to say the least, for at the Ree Post they behaved outrageously. Moise Arcan came up thence with despatches, and said that during a residence of over thirty years in the Indian country, chiefly among the Sioux, he had never known them so bad. More than two-thirds were in favor of hostilities, and several of the chiefs

advised all the old traders to leave the country soon, as war would inevitably break out. They said they did not want to kill those who had lived so long with them, and had become in a measure identified with themselves.

When making their trade with us, the Sioux reported, all through their country towards the Platte, the elk, deer, buffalo, bear, and wolf dying in great numbers from some sickness among them, caused by the "medicine" of the whites.

A couple of logs, lashed together to form a raft, such as a war-party might use to cross the river, floated down, and was caught, causing much speculation and anxiety among the Gros Ventres.

Some Crows also arrived from their camp at the Elkhorn prairie, in search of a child which the Spotted-Horse (a Crow living with the Gros Ventres) had redeemed from the Sioux three summers before. The Sioux, in an attack upon one of the Crow camps, among other spoils took this child prisoner. The Spotted-Horse succeeded in redeeming him for a very liberal ransom, and now his relatives having heard of it were anxious to recover him, which they did, after giving six fine horses, robes, and goods. They said, when the next moon was dead, a large party of Crows might be expected down to visit their relations, the Gros Ventres.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE FORT COMPLETED — RAISE THE AMERICAN FLAG — WARRIORS RETURN IN TRIUMPH — REJOICINGS — SCALP-DANCE.

IT was now almost the middle of May, and the Indian women were busy hoeing their corn-fields, and planting; grass was springing up everywhere, and the burnt prairie was covered with a beautiful carpet of velvet-green. All the trees and bushes were clothed in the bright, fresh hues of early summer, and the balmy air was filled with the cheerful notes of birds. The glorious golden sun shone with a brilliancy and vigor which we had vainly longed for in the short, dark days of the dreary winter. The young May moon brought clear and calm skies, and a few weeks of active work completed Fort Atkinson.

On the Sunday following, I had the honor of hoisting for the first time on the bastion flagstaff our national flag with its stars and stripes, amid the cheers and congratulations of the men. Little did

we think, as we watched it proudly floating over forest and prairie, that in scarcely a year from that time, that glorious banner would be trailed in the dust by the leaders of the most infamous rebellion the world ever saw.

The war-spirit was burning as fiercely as ever, spite of the reverses that had befallen the Gros Ventres. The Roundman had recovered from his wounds, and in a dream saw scalps close to the Ree village. He thereupon declared he was going to war again, and told his friends to "black their faces."

The old Wolf's-Head said he thought his medicine would fool him again, for he had not cut his hair after losing one of his warriors, as is the duty of a leader.

In a few days this redoubtable party started, intending to go as far as the Dog Buttes, in the vicinity of which they expected successfully to encounter their foe, if their partisan's medicine was good for anything.

Shots were suddenly heard on the prairie, and every one rushed forth, gun in hand, to see what they meant. Over the plain careered at full speed a band of warriors with blackened faces, whooping and yelling, and firing their guns. The excitement in the village was intense; it was the grand war-

party returning in triumph, bearing four scalps on the points of their lances. All the inhabitants rushed forth to greet them, the squaws singing and dancing in the exuberance of their joy. The victors formed into line, and rode in a close body up to the village, where they halted to receive the praises and congratulations to which they were entitled. The leaders, in the intoxication of success, gave away horses and guns. A pole, with hair attached, was quickly set up over the spot where the relatives of First-Feather and Wolf's-Eye's brother had bewailed them. The drum was sounded, and the scalp-dance commenced in the village, while joy and gladness reigned supreme.

Only the evening before they had discovered a small party of ten, near the Dog Buttes, coming towards them with their arms slung, evidently not expecting to meet enemies.

The Gros Ventres rushed on them; and the Gambler having a long lance, struck the first "coup" in his life. Three of the Sioux were instantly killed, and one badly wounded. But four scalps were taken; they could have dispatched all, but the Wolf's-Eye, fearing that some of his own warriors might be lost, and spoil the dancing when they returned to the village, called out to stop, and then hurried back to celebrate the victory.

All that night and the next day the rejoicings continued, and the scalp-dancers flourished around the village. Headed by the Wolf's-Eye, the men in a dense group sounded their rattles, singing and drumming, while the squaws shuffled in a circle around them with three scalps on poles, (the fourth having been sent down to the Rees, in order that they too might participate in the rejoicings,) screaming in shrill tones the scalp-song.

The faces of all were blackened, and they looked like fiends of darkness let loose.

Pierre Garreau's sons were avenged.

. . . . . .

In the evening the Roundman's party returned, straggling in a few at a time. Had they gone only a short distance further, they would have seen the enemy, but all agreed that their partisan's medicine was very strong and good.

CHAPTER XXX.

JUNE RISE — INDIAN TALK — "MEDICINE" — THE HERMIT OF THE BLACK HILLS — MANDANS LEAVE FOR THEIR OLD VILLAGE — WOLF HUNT — CROWS ARRIVE — THEIR THIEVING PROPENSITIES — OUR HORSES LOST — CROWS DEPART FOR THE WIND RIVER MOUNTAINS.

THE leafy month of June had come, and the prairie was clothed in a beautiful dark-green. The thickets of service-berries were loaded with fruit, and the wild roses shed a delicious perfume on the summer air.

The Indian horses, luxuriating in a respite after the incessant toil of the winter hunt, were beginning to show, by their sleek and glossy appearance, that the herbage of the plains was most grateful to them.

The Missouri commenced to feel the melting of the snows in its mountain tributaries, and its swollen and turbid waters rushed and foamed wildly around the base of the lofty promontory upon which the village was built.

Great quantities of drift-wood and floating trees were caught in the whirling eddy below the fort, and gave constant employment to the women and girls, who put out in their bull-boats, and thus secured plenty of fuel. In a short time the road leading down to the water was completely blocked up with piles of wood, and the ladies were in high glee at the labor saved in having their firewood brought to their very doors, as it were.

The bank against which the water beat was rapidly undermined, and falling in almost hourly with a loud crash. Cornfields that, when planted, were fully fifty feet from the river, were now more than half washed away, and many a squaw looked with rueful countenance on the patch of ground, where she had bestowed so much toil and expected such good results, quickly disappearing before her gaze.

With high water the arrival of the steamboat began to be agitated, and many inquiries were constantly made in how many nights the "fire-canoe" would be here.

To the whites it was a season of ease and indolence. The houses had been washed inside and out with white clay, and the area being well cleaned and swept, the fort presented a very neat appearance. The men had now little to do, and mostly passed their time in hunting and fishing.

Our provisions were nearly exhausted; the small stock on hand being used with the utmost care to last as long as possible, until the annual boat would bring a fresh supply. Consequently the usual entertainment to the coffee-loving Indians was given up for want of means, causing a great falling off in the attendance at meal-time.

The Four-Bears called occasionally, but was not at all regular in his habits, now that there was nothing to be made by it. But my old comrade, the Bobtail-Wolf, visited me as ever, and always received his pan of bouillon, well peppered and salted, which he infinitely preferred. Doctor E-ten-ah-pen-ah also continued to make my house his headquarters, and as the days grew longer and longer, till it often seemed that darkness would never come, I derived great amusement in listening to the conversation of these worthies, and occasionally taking part. They were discussing the causes which led to the defeat of several of the war-parties that had gone out in the spring.

The Wolf said to the Doctor, "My brother, your medicine is strong; it is very strong; all the He-rae-an-seh acknowledge it to be so. I beg you not to throw any of it on the Gros Ventres, and thereby cause defeat and losses of various kinds in war and hunting. I am a chief; when I talk to the Gros

Ventres, what I say goes straight to their ears; my speech is always straight, not forked or travelling in two ways. Heed what I say, and I will exert my influence among the Gros Ventres in your behalf."

The Doctor listened to this earnest harangue with becoming gravity, but when I caught his eye, there was a certain sly twinkle in its corner, that showed the old rascal was fully aware of his power, and intended to improve it. I sometimes amused myself by the exhibition of a few trifling sleight-of-hand tricks, which greatly excited the wonder of my spectators. That which had the strongest "medicinal" effect consisted simply in putting three wafers on one side of a knife and causing them to appear and disappear at will.

This performance never failed to create the utmost astonishment in my friends, and the Doctor was especially anxious to add it to his list of medicines.

The Grindstone, an old Oncpapa Sioux, who with his family resided among the Gros Ventres, frequently talked about a white hermit in the pines among the Black Hills. He had a hut on the summit of some towering rocks,— no one had seen him, but they knew him to be a very tall man, because they (the Sioux) found a deer which he had killed and hung up in the top of a lofty pine-tree. He is the person, they think, who poisoned all the creeks and

streams, causing such distress among the wild animals. There had been no thunder this spring, and it was currently believed that he had killed the thunder-bird.

The previous summer, when on a visit to the Crows, the Wolf painted a young Crow warrior, and said he gave him half his medicine; *he* was a chief, and he gave him the same chance to become one. The young man took the name of the Black-Cloud and painted half his shield black; he then went to war and stole two horses, when he sent word down that they were for the Wolf,— his medicine was good, and he wanted his shield black all over.

The Mandans began to agitate the question of returning to their old village, close by the Riccarees, to plant corn in the same fields they had tilled years ago, when their nation was strong and powerful, and the terror of its arms extended far and wide. Some thirty families prepared to move away; the squaws loaded their effects in bull-boats, and started off by water, while the men drove the horses across the country.

One afternoon the Roundman came to propose going on a wolf-hunt, saying that he had found close by a cave in which a she-wolf was suckling her pups. As there was no inducement to do anything else, I assented, and shouldering my gun, we

started off. Crossing a wide strip of prairie, we came to the hills, and after a much longer walk than I had any reason to expect, descended the steep sides of a ravine, at the base of which the Roundman pointed out a hole in the ground, which he said was the entrance to the wolf's den. We stopped, like prudent hunters, to thoroughly survey our ground before commencing operations, and a pipe was smoked to propitiate the Wolf Spirit in our behalf. The Roundman threw in stones, while I stood with my gun ready to shoot the wolf as soon as she made her appearance. The stones rolled one after another to the bottom of the den, with a dull, heavy sound, without provoking any response. Next a long pole was thrust down, and vigorously poked about, but without producing any better result. At last, as there was no other alternative, we commenced cutting away the bushes at the entrance, to widen it, keeping a sharp lookout all the while, lest madam should unexpectedly make her appearance. After expending some labor, we made the hole wide enough to admit of the passage of the Roundman, who, stripping himself to the clout, crawled in head foremost, with his knife in one hand, and his tomahawk in the other. I listened anxiously for the startled growl, but none came; and directly my friend backed out of the den,

reporting that the wolves had left their lair, and that but recently. We hunted all the rest of the afternoon, but were unsuccessful in finding them. A few days earlier, before the pups were able to run about, our enterprise would undoubtedly have resulted differently.

The scouts on the hills signalled the approach of mounted Indians, men and women, from "above." Directly a motley crowd went forth to meet and escort the visitors (supposed to be Crows) to the village, while the squaws hurried to fill their kettles and made every preparation to feast their guests. Soon the wild procession came in sight on the crest of a hill, and descending into the plain, halted to smoke with the dashing blades of the Gros Ventres. The latter rode around their visitors in high feather, while the Crows, with their strongly-marked aquiline features, and profusely garnished skin dresses, burnt and blackened by exposure to wind and weather, looked Indians all over.

The men were tall and powerful, and all were finely mounted. Fully one-half of the party were women, who took charge of the extra horses, and in point of numbers the cavalcade presented a goodly appearance.

The squaws were very large and coarse, with long, tangled, black hair, which, falling free and unconfined over their shoulders, did not add to their attractions in the least.

No sooner had they disappeared within the enclosure of the village, than I went straightway to my quarters and put all my possessions under lock and key, as the Crows' ideas of *meum* and *tuum*, unlike my Gros Ventres friends, were strangely confused, and I had conscientious scruples about placing temptation in their way.

Of course, after going through a round of feasting, the next places to visit were the Trading-Posts, and until the gates were closed, they peered into every nook and corner with a pertinacity that was not to be bluffed off, and which only a Crow can equal. The women were especially annoying, and in spite of our vigilance, quite a number of knives and other small articles were stolen, chiefly from the men's quarters, who anathematized "Injins" in general, but the Crows in particular.

Like all prairie Indians who visit a trading-post only at long intervals, everything is strange and new, and in satisfying their very strong curiosity, they often become exceedingly troublesome.

The band of horses belonging to the Post had been for some time under the care of an Indian who usually performed his duties as guard with great fidelity. In common however with the rest of his comrades, he rode off to greet the Crows, and on returning where he had left the horses quietly feed-

ing, but two only could be seen. This was unlucky, should we not succeed in finding them on the morrow, as there were a number of very fine animals belonging to individuals connected with the Post.

Early the next morning, Malnouri and myself mounted the two remaining horses and started off, determined to recover them, if they had only strayed, and not been stolen by a war-party of Sioux, who were nearly always lurking in the neighborhood. We each took a different trail, appointing a place to rendezvous, in event of either one being successful. Noon came, and saw us refreshing ourselves at a cool spring, which gurgled through the hills. Both had ridden over a wide expanse of prairie, without discovering the slightest trace of our missing caballada, nor had anything been seen by the scouts of the village. After a short halt we renewed our search, taking as before a different circuit. I struck into an old buffalo-path, which led me through the ravines, and over the hills for miles, until it was lost on a high, sloping prairie, whose vast expanse swept far away to the northward.

Here I halted, and dismounting, took a careful survey of the prairie with my glass, and was just able to distinguish a group of some kind a long distance off. It might be either Indians, buffalo, or the missing band. I proceeded cautiously, until

I was able to distinguish clearly that they were horses. It was our band, crowded close together, with dishevelled manes and raised tails, surrounded by a large gang of gray wolves who were induced to fall back a little on my approach by the discharge of a pistol. Right glad was I to see old Mac again, and starting the band off at a gallop, I had the satisfaction of reaching the fort just after Malnouri had arrived with rueful countenance, which was quickly cheered by the trampling hoofs, as the horses, his two favorite "runners" among them, dashed into the corral, the gate of which securely fastened, precluded all possibility of a further stampede that night.

After spending a couple of weeks, and thoroughly wearing out their welcome, so far as the whites were concerned, the Crow horde took their departure for the camp of their tribe on the Yellowstone, in great tribulation lest they should meet with a party of either of their deadly foes, the Sioux or Blackfeet, which we most devoutly wished they might. They feared also lest their camp, finding the Yellowstone country too hot for them, would move off to a more secure hunting-ground in the Wind-River Mountains, and thus their small body would be compelled to traverse a long and very dangerous road.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN INDIAN MUSICIAN — TRIP TO THE REES — CHASED BY A WAR-PARTY — CLOSE QUARTERS — A RIDE FOR LIFE — INDIAN STRATEGY.

THE old adage, "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast," was not exemplified in the case of the "Crane," a Gros Ventre Indian of exceedingly tall stature — hence his name. A violin belonging to me attracted his fancy, and nothing would do until he obtained possession, giving far more than its value, in fine, painted robes, and stalked off with his prize, in triumph, to his lodge. I felicitated myself on the capital trade I had made, and imagined the Crane entertaining his guests with dulcet strains from his fiddle. Several days elapsed, and I saw one morning the tall form of the Crane approaching, with lowering brow and measured tread.

"Borraquoi," (my friend,) said he, "my squaw's heart is bad towards me. She calls me a fool, and says the robes she dressed were to be traded for blankets, and she can't sleep because of the noise I

make;—take your fiddle, and give me back my robes."

I could not help sympathizing with his squaw in the annoyance his attempts to extract music at all hours of the day and night must have caused, but declined trading back on any terms. The Crane, after sitting a while, got up without another word and retired to the village. But the end was not yet. In a short time I saw his squaw coming toward the fort, carrying the luckless violin on her back, after the usual fashion of Indian women. I quickly fastened the door of my room, and watched her through the window. She laid the cause of her unhappiness at my door, and retired around the corner, where I allowed her to wait, until despairing of my appearance, she picked up her treasure, with every manifestation of anger, and departed.

I went back to my room, and influenced by one of those impulses which cannot always be controlled, and are often unaccountable, took down my revolver and double-barrelled gun, and proceeded to place fresh caps upon them.

While thus engaged, the door was opened, and in marched the Crane, evidently carrying the violin under his robe. He halted upon seeing the nature of my occupation, and ejaculated "How!"—I replied, inviting him to sit down, which he did, with a black

cloud upon his brow. My pistol was by this time capped, and carelessly throwing my gun into the hollow of my arm, I dropped the muzzle, as if merely by accident, full upon the Crane, who sat at the opposite side of the room. "Click, click," went the lock of one barrel; "click, click," the lock of the other. The Crane's countenance changed expression, and he slightly moved his seat. I picked up a piece of buckskin to polish the mountings, and in doing so, as if by chance, brought the muzzle again to bear upon the Crane. This had now continued several minutes, and I began to be concerned as to how it would end, when his countenance brightened, as if his mind was made up and greatly relieved thereat.

With the simple remark that "women were fools," with which laudation of the sex I thought proper to coincide, he gathered up his robe, and left in very good humor; and from that to the day of his death, some two years after, neither he nor his squaw ever alluded to the subject again. How they compromised matters I know not,—whether the Crane pursued his musical studies in peace, or whether he abandoned them altogether out of regard for the comfort and domestic tranquillity of his family. I was very glad it ended as it did, for neither of us wished to push matters to extremities.

It was now about the time when the annual steamboat might be daily looked for; and expecting it almost hourly, as it were, the days seemed interminable, and we were fairly at our wit's end to devise means to pass away the time. Not a white cloud appeared in the direction from which the chimneys of the approaching steamer would first show themselves that was not mistaken for the steam from the escape-pipes, giving rise to the very natural excitement consequent upon the announcement that the "Mahti-shee-sheesh" was coming. To sleep all the time was impossible, and from the slender amount of provisions on hand, our mess-table was by no means attractive, corn-coffee being, in the estimation of a mountaineer, a forlorn substitute for the genuine beverage.

This being the state of affairs, I gladly availed myself of the opportunity presented to join a party of Gros Ventres going down to the Rees. William Fisher, one of our men, increased our strength to seventeen, all mounted on picked horses. Our trip was accomplished without any incident, and after spending a couple of days very pleasantly at the Ree village, we started on our return. At the upper crossing of Little Knife River, the Indians stopped to smoke, and let their horses graze.

But the halt was destined to be of short duration:

a large band of Sioux suddenly appeared on the hills not more than two miles off, and dashed towards us, evidently with the intention of "cutting" our trail. The instant they were discovered we rushed for our horses, and mounting, made for the broken land on the Missouri. A warrior named the Wood was our leader, and we strung out in Indian file, each one's place being regulated simply by the speed of his horse, who was kept at his fastest pace, with but the one thought, to get away from the pursuers. For the first few miles the race was closely contested, neither party getting the advantage; but when our foaming horses gained the broken land, our leader's superior skill was evident.

Never before had I been so forcibly impressed with the instinctive, unerring sagacity of the Indian. Knowing every foot of the country, without slackening speed, he carefully avoided the ridges, following up the ravines, completely concealing us from our pursuers. The hard, sun-baked soil of the prairie gave not the faintest hoof-print; and we now had greatly the advantage, since the chances of the Sioux finding us in those innumerable ravines were materially lessened. At one time we were almost within gunshot, and halting suddenly, scarcely breathed until they had ridden past.

The race had continued some ten miles, and we were near the Red Springs, when the Wood halted us to "discover." Crawling cautiously to the top of the nearest knoll, we could see the Sioux riding about in a confused group, as if they had lost us, and were trying to come upon the trail again. Our spirits rose greatly, and the Wood announced his intention of going to some deserted winter-lodges not far off, where we could intrench ourselves, adding, that if we were discovered before we reached them, our only resource was to make for the Missouri, and trust to its waters.

Swiftly and cautiously we hurried on, until the friendly shelter of the forest near the Red Springs was gained. A couple of large, round lodges, in a tolerable state of preservation, were selected, close to the river. Into one of these we secured our horses, and, after fortifying the other with a breast-work of logs, kept a sleepless watch all night, the Indians listening anxiously for the slightest sounds.

Morning broke at last, but no traces of our pursuers were visible. All that day we laid close in our retreat, and at nightfall resumed our saddles. The Wood, leaving the usual trail across the prairie, followed the river, keeping under cover of the broken land as much as possible, and morning found us on the sand-bar waiting for the bull-boats

to take us over. Even now we dreaded lest the Sioux, having anticipated our destination, should make a sudden onslaught, but our fears were fortunately without foundation.

Neither our horses nor ourselves had eaten anything since leaving the Ree village, nearly three days before. The poor animals had suffered severely, and it was pleasant to see them feeding on the rich grass, and indemnifying themselves for past hardships.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FALSE ALARMS—"THE STEAMBOAT"—ANNUAL CARNIVAL —QUIET ONCE MORE—FATHER DE SMET.

A FEW nights after this adventure we were roused by a violent pounding at the gate, and voices shouting for the "whites to get up, the steamboat was coming!"

Without loss of time, every one was out, and eager inquiries passed around. It seems that an Indian had arrived on the other side, calling for a bull-boat, whereupon several of our friends hurried at once to the fort, telling us that he had news of the steamboat.

The squaws were afraid to cross over in their bull-boats, fearing it might be a trick of the Sioux to lure them into an ambuscade; but some of our men, in their eagerness, went over in the skiff; and when they returned, quite a large crowd gathered around the new-comer to hear what he had to say. He had heard nothing, seen nothing—it was merely a *ruse* to get him crossed, as none of the squaws would venture. A very quiet and subdued party of white

men returned to their Fort, and slept soundly the remainder of the night.

But our disappointment was not doomed to be of long duration, for the very next afternoon an unusual outcry was heard in the camp, and every one rushed out, expecting to see nothing less than an immense war-party of Yanctohwahs, debouching from the hills on horseback, to give the Gros Ventres battle. But soon the word was "Fire-canoe," and sure enough, against the bluffs that lined the southern shore of the river, was seen what at first appeared to be a faint white cloud floating on the summer air, but by the regular puffs we knew must be the escape from a steamboat.

All was now bustle and commotion; the Stars and Stripes were run up on the flag-staff, and each man made the most careful toilet his limited wardrobe would admit of. The Indians, too, shared the general excitement, and the *bannerêts* made their appearance, painted and decked out in all the colors of the rainbow.

The tops of the tall black chimneys now became visible above the elm-point, and soon after, the boat itself came into full view, slowly but steadily breasting the strong current. Which boat was it, ours, or the American Fur Company's, was anxiously questioned. She turned the bend, not more than a

mile off, and was now coming directly towards us. Nearer and nearer she steamed; the paddle-wheels could be distinctly heard; then a white wreath of smoke enveloped her bows, and directly the report of a cannon was borne on the air. The salute was promptly returned, and continued until she lay at the landing within a stone's throw of the Post. All doubt was at an end; the boat was our own, direct from St. Louis, with a full equipment for the ensuing year.

It seemed strange to see civilization, as typified by the steamboat, in the heart of the wilderness. The Indians, grouped on the brow of the bluff, were interested spectators of the scene. There were yet many among them who remembered the first steamboat that ever ploughed the waters of the Upper Missouri, and the dreadful scourge that soon after broke out in their midst, and has proved so signally fatal to the race.

Mountaineers greeted acquaintances, and hurried away with mysterious black bottles secreted about their persons; the deck-hands unloaded the freight, and all was bustle and excitement.

The teams were soon busily engaged in hauling up the supplies to the Fort, and after staying only long enough to put off the freight intended for us, the steamer continued her voyage.

It was midnight before the last wagon-load was stored away, and then, securely locking the gates, we left the new hands to be initiated into the mysteries of mountain life by the old ones.

I opened, with hesitating eagerness, the large package of letters and papers, to learn of all that had happened during the past year in the civilized world, and the tidings from the loved ones in their far-off home.

The following day was one of continued bustle. Indians thronged the store, bringing furs, which they had reserved to trade until the boats should arrive with fresh goods. Packages were hastily opened, and anything wanted was sure to be found at the bottom. For two days we had the monopoly of the trade, but on the third, the boat of the American Fur Company arrived, having the Indian agent and annuities on board.

The Agent held the usual Council; gave the usual stereotyped advice, "to love their Great Father, and their enemies," to which they responded with the usual grunt; and the Council broke up, without the Indians having a very exalted opinion of the Agent, or his ability. The annuities were landed; and, compared with the preceding year, the pile was beautifully less, so insignificant, in fact, that the Indians considered it rather an insult than otherwise.

The Government appropriations are supposed to be liberal; but it so happens that by the time they reach their destination, they have, and not mysteriously either, dwindled down into a paltry present.

During the time that the boats were up the river, the new voyageurs, *mangeurs du lard*, (pork-eaters,) as they were termed the first year of their novitiate, were becoming fully initiated into the charms of mountain life, and the old hands, whose time had expired, and who were going down to the settlements, were busy taking farewell of their Indian sweethearts, and loading their trunks with moccasins, and trash generally. Whiskey, smuggled by the deck hands, was not wanting, and the carousal was at its height.

In less than ten days after leaving us, our steamboat returned from Fort Stuart, eighty miles above the mouth of the Yellowstone; and after shipping the packs of robes and peltries, took her departure for St. Louis.

In the changes that were made, I was placed in charge of the Post until the arrival of one of the partners of the Company from the lower country, which would not be until late in the fall.

In a few days the American Fur Company's boat also returned, and it was with a feeling of relief that we saw her smoke-stacks disappearing behind

the forest, as she pursued her way down the river. The annual carnival was at an end, — the reign of Minne-bae-tah (fire-water) was over for another year, — and in our voluntary seclusion we would be undisturbed by the throbs and throes of the civilized world.

The Gros Ventres returned in due time from their visit to the Crows, having obtained from them a supply of horses, of which the Crows possess immense numbers. Our friends the Sioux paid us occasional visits, doing no damage beyond stealing a few horses and keeping us constantly on the *qui vive*.

In the fall, the Reverend Father De Smet, the celebrated Apostle of the Indians, arrived from the Blackfeet, in a small boat, with four men. The Reverend Father was one of our passengers on the *Twilight*, as far as Fort Leavenworth, where he left to join the Utah Expedition. He had crossed the Rocky Mountains, and visited the missions on the Columbia River among the Flatheads, Nez Perces, and other tribes; and having completed his tour, was now on his way to St. Louis. Father De Smet is universally revered by all the Indian nations, and known far and wide. Among the rude mountaineers he commands the utmost respect by his gentle, winning manners, and the practical, common-sense

view he takes of the errors in their mode of life. Many strange and true stories are told of his wonderful adventures among hostile tribes, and the almost supernatural awe in which they hold him. The whole of a long life has been devoted to the welfare of the Indians, and they have no truer or abler advocate.

Father De Smet remained with us over night, and baptized five or six half-breeds, children of some of the retainers of the Post, as well as a number of Indian children in the Four-Bears' lodge, to all of whom he gave a medal.

The morning sun saw the Father on his voyage, with his stores replenished to the best of our ability, and the heartfelt good wishes of all.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WINTER-QUARTERS — NO TRADERS IN CAMP — A FRIEND IN NEED — SERIOUS DIFFICULTY WITH THE RICCAREES — ALMOST A MASSACRE — HOMŒOPATHY VS. STRYCHNINE — BAD INFLUENCE OF AN UNPRINCIPLED WHITE MAN.

THE beautiful Indian summer had come again, with its delightful weather and hazy skies. Vast flocks of wild fowl were flying South, and Nature's signs admonished the Indians that it would soon be time to seek their winter-quarters. Preparations were rife throughout the camp, skin lodges were put in order, and a day appointed to move.

The Poor-Wolf and Crow's-Breast, of the soldier band, came to me and said that it had been decided not to allow traders in camp, unless they increased the price of a buffalo-robe to ten cups of sugar, other goods in proportion, asking a considerable advance over present rates, which were already uncommonly high.

Deeming it politic to keep them in good humor, pending the arrival of the new Bourgeois, Mr.

Wickham, I held a council, and gave a feast to the Gros Ventres, to ascertain exactly their views about the coming trade. The Four-Bears, Crow's-Breast, and Snakeskin were the principal speakers. They unanimously declared that if one Company went the other should go too; but in no case should either go, unless they agreed to give the increased price demanded. In expectation of Mr. Wickham's speedy arrival, I deferred an answer for the present, and the council broke up in the best of humor, but with the understanding that, as matters stood, there would be no traders allowed in camp that winter.

So the Gros Ventres went away to their winter-quarters; but hardly were the last of them out of sight, ere a party of Rees rode up, and reported their camp also on the way to winter-quarters, which were to be established in a fine point of timber about ten miles below us.

The agreeable prospect therefore presented itself of daily arrivals from the camp of these undesirable neighbors, coming ostensibly to trade, but in reality to beg and steal. Like the Gros Ventres, they too determined to exact the highest rates for their robes, and were likely to leave no means untried to compass their ends.

Such was the position of affairs when Mr. Wickham arrived, with a couple of teams from Fort

Pierre. As soon as the Rees learned that he had come, a messenger was sent to tell him that a large party would be up in two days to hold a grand "talk," and establish the prices for the ensuing season. From the threatening tone of the message, and excited feelings of the Indians, there was every indication of trouble, perhaps bloodshed, if their "requests" were not complied with.

After deliberating upon the subject, Wickham vowed he "would not be browbeat by a party of beggarly Indians," and even contemplated reducing the present rates.

Every preparation was made for the council. Huge kettles of coffee, barrels of hard bread, with blankets, scarlet cloth, calico, knives, ammunition, and tobacco,—a goodly pile.

At last an Indian is seen riding up at a gallop. He proves to be the White-Face-Bear, one of the greatest rascals among the Riccarees. The White-Face-Bear grasps each one of us cordially by the hand, and says his people are in sight, and will be here shortly; that they have very few women with them, and are for peace; or war if their "reasonable demands" are not complied with. He further declares that he loves the whites, and has loaded his fusee with *nine* balls, intending to fight for us if it comes to the worst.

Matters began to assume a most threatening aspect. The Rees were now in sight, each band by itself, painted and armed, to signify that the choice, peace or war, lay with us. Nearer and nearer they came, halting frequently, to smoke and deliberate among themselves. It was almost determined at one time to close the gates, and defy them to their utmost; but on reflection this course was abandoned, as it was our policy to conciliate the savages instead of exasperating them.

I stepped into my room a moment, and turning to go out met the White-Face-Bear, who said he was going to remain there, and keep out all intruders. There were but few small articles lying around, and I had no time to object, so leaving him there, hurried to the gate. The Recs were now within a few hundred yards, advancing in close order. Wickham, anxious and uncertain as to the result of the council, with his interpreter, seated himself in front of the Indian room. To begin by showing distrust would provoke and hasten hostilities; to meet them as friends, might mollify and quiet them. The latter course was finally resolved upon.

The Indians had halted about fifty yards from the gates, upon which I advanced to meet them with the pipe, always an emblem of peace. I had got to within twenty paces of them, when they

came on with fierce and startling whoops and yells, brandishing their weapons with menacing gestures. Guns were discharged in every direction; bullets flew around me, and buried themselves in the ground close to my feet, and arrows whizzed by in uncomfortable proximity to my head.

A warrior raised his tomahawk to strike me, but his arm was arrested by the Son-of-the-starry-robe, who, halting in front of me, looked me full in the eye. I met him with a gaze as steady, and the White-Parflesh coming up, placed himself by my side, and simply remarked, "Your heart is strong." The Indians divided on either side, and passed through the gates into the Fort. My protectors brought up the rear, and we entered the yard together.

Human forms, closely muffled in robes and blankets, were seated forming a hollow square. Sullen looks and fierce scowls greeted the men who brought in the heavy kettles of steaming coffee, and placed them before the Bourgeois.

The feast and liberal presents accompanying it, elicited not the slightest token of interest; much less, the usual grunt of approbation.

A pause followed — the silence was profound, and full of boding. Never did Nature look more radiantly lovely than on this bright day in the golden autumn.

The nerves of all were strung to their highest tension, when the painful silence was broken by the White-Parflesh rising to address the assemblage. He said they had all come to greet the Yellow-Beard, (Wickham,) and get him "to make a road for them," *i. e.*, give them advice, which they promised to follow. The White-Parflesh had known the traders for many snows, and felt drawn towards them. He loved them, and would like to wrap them up in his robe. Would not the Yellow-Beard take pity upon his sincere friends the Rees, and trade easier with them? — give them life, — pay a little more for their robes, which their women dressed with so much toil — ten cups of sugar, just for one day only?

Wickham replied that the traders were giving all they could, and a further advance in price was impossible; and in Indian fashion, begged in his turn that the Rees would take pity upon him, and let him travel in the road that his predecessors had made. The Star-Robe followed, and continued at length in a similar strain.

Other speeches were made to the same effect, and a number of handsome robes were thrown or given, as evidences of good feeling on the part of the Indians. The Yellow-Beard remained inflexible,

and the Rees changed their tone to one of anger and threatening.

Several hours had thus been consumed, during which we remained sitting in the open air. Wickham feeling chilly, stepped into the Indian room close at hand, to warm himself for a few minutes, while the Bear's-Ear, an Indian totally destitute of any good qualities, was speaking.

No sooner had he gone in, than the Star-Robe followed, and told him to return and listen to the speeches. He at once resumed his place, when the Pointed-Horns commenced a harangue in a most excited manner, gesticulating energetically all the while. At length he paused for a reply, amid a general shout of approbation from his people, when the interpreter, a most contemptible creature named Elien, whose Indian *sobriquet* of the Jaw fully illustrated his character, took upon himself to tell them (as we subsequently learned) that it was no use talking any longer. That the Yellow-Beard's heart was with the Sioux, with whom he had always lived; that he did not like the Rees, and that was why he would not "look at them."

This foolish remark was at once taken up. The Rees, always ripe for mischief when the whites were concerned, became inflamed in an instant; and before any one had the slightest suspicion, the

Bear's-Ear sprang to his feet, and discharged his fusee into the barrel of bread, blowing it to pieces. In a moment a crowd rushed up, guns were discharged, the kettles of coffee overturned and pounded out of all shape. The blankets and cloth were torn into shreds, and a couple of our dogs, who unfortunately happened to come in the way, were killed.

Their blood was fully aroused, and moments seemed ages of anxious suspense, when several of the chiefs interfered, and aided by the soldiers, with much trouble drove the Indians out. They retired doggedly, and halted once, as if they intended to return and finish their work. No sooner was the last one out than the gates were securely shut and barred, and we felt relieved from the danger that had threatened.

Wickham was an entire stranger to these Indians. He had been a number of years among the Sioux at Fort Pierre, however, and was well acquainted with Indian character, but unfortunately his interpreter on this occasion was *culpably* inefficient, or else the difficulty might have been altogether avoided. It was only owing to the fact of dissensions springing up among themselves, at the very time they should have been united, that prevented the massacre at Fort Atkinson.

The Rees did not visit the American Fur Com-

pany's Post, and Wickham always insisted — and subsequent events proved him correct — that they were *pushed to extreme measures by a renegade white man living among them.*

The following day some half dozen Rees made their appearance, riding at full speed toward the Fort. As they drew near we recognized the White-Parflesh and Iron-Bear, and speculation was rife as to the reason of their coming so soon after the difficulty of the day before. Their lowering brows and sullen demeanor soon showed that "their hearts still felt bad towards us," and the question at once asked by them did not help to clear up matters in the least.

The delegation had come up expressly to know why I had given the White-Face-Bear a bottle of wolf medicine, (strychnine,) to make all the Indians sick?

After some trouble I learned that the Indian in question had returned to the Ree Camp, and exhibited a bottle, which he said contained wolf medicine, and proclaimed his intention of poisoning all who made themselves obnoxious to him.

At length it occurred to me that my Homœopathic medicine-chest was standing on the table in my room when the White-Face Bear came in the day before, to extend his "protection" in anticipation of the difficulty which was soon after raised, and I

began to suspect the true state of affairs. My suspicions were confirmed, when upon examining my medicine-chest, I found one of the vials missing.

Everything was then easily explained. I took a portion of the contents of several vials, to prove their utter harmlessness, and the delegation, after waiting a sufficient time to see what effect it would have upon me, returned to camp, relieved of great anxiety, and myself of what might have been a very serious affair attributed to my agency, and how it might have terminated, is difficult to say.

The Indians were aware of the appearance and deadly properties of strychnine, from its being of late years so extensively used by the trappers to take wolves, almost superseding the old-fashioned trap. It has nevertheless to be used stealthily, and with exceeding great care, as the Indians, with the superstitious notions to which they are prone, and the ravages of the small-pox and cholera brought among them by the white men, fresh in their minds, entertain great fears of a general taint and sickness arising from the poisoned carcasses.

Thus happily ended our misunderstanding with the Rees, which at one time bid fair to lead to a most serious, if not disastrous termination, and which beyond doubt was instigated by an unprincipled *white man* to gratify a personal feeling.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

OFF FOR THE MOUNTAINS — THE BORDER — CONDITION OF AFFAIRS — INDIAN TROUBLES — MURDER OF FRIENDLY INDIANS — DESERTED VILLAGE — OLD MEMORIES — AMONG THE GROS VENTRES — OLD FRIENDS — HORSES STOLEN BY THE SIOUX.

IN the spring of 1863 I was on board of the steamer *Robert Campbell*, again bound for the head-waters of the Missouri. Her consort, the *Shreveport*, a much smaller boat, had preceded us several weeks, intending to return and lighten us before we reached the upper river. The boat was under the command of Captain Joseph Labarge, who had for a long period of years been in the employ of the American Fur Company in their annual expeditions up the river. Jerry Millington, the clerk, and McKinney, the pilot of the old *Twilight*, were also on board in a similar capacity. The passengers consisted of two Indian agents, the veteran trader, Col. Alexander Culbertson and his Blackfoot wife, a few mountaineers, and a number of adventurers, the latter bound for the newly-discovered gold fields of Montana. The river was

unusually low, but beyond annoying detentions on the numerous sand-bars, which sadly impeded our progress, we arrived at Sioux City without any noteworthy incident. Here was encamped an army, preparing to take the field, and inflict upon the savage foe signal punishment.

The army took the field—the bugles were blown, the antelope, badly frightened, sped over the hills, while from distant bluffs "the d——d redskins" defiantly waved their breech-clouts. Some few squaws were captured, and the army went into winter-quarters, the Indians having gone out of sight, and the safety of the frontiers thus being assured.

At Fort Pierre were stationed several companies of cavalry, and Mr. Primeau reported the Indians very bad above there. This information, coming as it did from a trader of his reliability and experience, was not to be lightly treated. A few Sioux were encamped close by, to receive their annuities, and have a talk inflicted upon them by their "Father," who happened this year to be a Major Latta. The speeches were ably interpreted by François La Fromboise, but the Indians certainly had all the powers of argument and oratory on their side. They begged for arms and ammunition on the plea of procuring subsistence for their families,

and complained bitterly of the murder of eight friendly Indians at Fort Randall by United States Volunteers a short time previously.

It was a great relief to all when the "talk" was over, and we once more steamed up the mighty river. The cannon on board was carefully loaded; extra ammunition provided, and every man prepared himself to act on the defensive. At night the boat would be always anchored in the middle of the stream, and great caution was exercised while wooding, to avoid a surprise.

At Grand River, the remains of a bull-boat and numerous fresh tracks showed that a large party of Indians had but recently crossed. Game was unusually abundant, bands of buffalo being in sight nearly all the time.

At Heart River Island, in backing down to find a channel, the rudder broke, requiring a day's work to repair it.

While laying up for this purpose, the *Shreveport* hove in sight, having ascended as high as Cow Island, below Fort Benton, where she discharged her freight, and hurried down to meet us. Part of our cargo was at once transferred to her, and the repairs being completed by sundown, both boats steamed on a few miles before anchoring.

By evening of the following day we landed at

the deserted village of the Mandans and Riccarees. While the deck-hands were tearing down some of the lodges that were still standing for firewood, I strolled around among the familiar places.

What a change since I first ascended the river in 1858! Not a vestige was left of either Trading-Post, save a pile of stones which marked the spot where the cheerful fires once blazed in the chimneys. The ice-house, nearly filled up with rubbish, and the lonely graves of those white men who had died while in the Company's employ, were almost concealed by a rank wilderness of weeds.

Instead of the closely-cropped, bare appearance it presented when the Indian horses pastured there, the surrounding prairie was covered with a luxuriant growth of grass. One or two scaffolds of the dead were still standing, but the medicine-poles no longer reared their outlines against the sky, and the circles of human skulls were scattered and fast disappearing.

The devastating marks of the ruthless Sioux were everywhere visible. An open grave attracted my attention; it contained the form of an Indian in a perfect state of preservation, and the expression of his vermilion-painted face was strikingly natural. Years ago the Mandans dwelt here, a happy and thriving people, until the terrible small-pox almost

obliterated them as a tribe, and the Riccarees moving up from their village on Grand River, took possession.

The cholera and small-pox again spread desolation among them, but they remained until the traders abandoned their Posts, when the Sioux, taking advantage of their absence at winter-quarters, burned the Forts (now become the property of the Indians) and many of their lodges. The old associations being thus in a measure broken up, they moved to the Gros Ventre village, and built for themselves new homes.

It was with a feeling of sadness that I wandered amid the well-known scenes, and I felt relieved when the tolling of the bell summoned all on board.

By afternoon of the following day, the familiar bluffs and prairies of the Gros Ventres came into view.

The sand-bar in the river was larger, and caused some delay before a landing could be effected in the eddy below the village. Many changes had taken place during my absence of a few months.

The united tribes of Rees, Gros Ventres, and Mandans, made a very large village, and the new lodges greatly altered the appearance of the place. Old Fort Berthold had been burned down by the Sioux, and Fort Atkinson (now called Berthold)

was occupied by the American Fur Company. It narrowly escaped being captured by an overwhelming force of Sioux while the Gros Ventres were yet at winter-quarters; and if a party of the latter had not chanced to be present when the attack was made, the handful of traders would have been overpowered. The bullet-marks in the stockade and bastions showed how fierce the fight had been.

My Indian friends welcomed me back, and I was called to feasts in a number of lodges, and fifteen handsomely painted robes given me. When they found I was going on to Fort Union, they expressed great regret, and made me promise to return to them in the following spring, which I fully expected to do.

Here again we heard further confirmation of the gathering of hostile Sioux on the river, and if attacked at all, it would be most probably this side of the Yellowstone.

The next day we continued on, the *Shreveport* in advance, to find the channel, and by noon arrived at the mouth of Rising Water, not far below the point on which the old winter-quarters were located. The boat landed soon after by a sand-bar which was covered with drift-wood, to take in a supply.

While thus engaged, several Indians appeared on the opposite bank, and called out in the Gros Ventre tongue for a boat, and they would send

back some fresh buffalo-meat. They proved to be old acquaintances, one of them being my friend "Bonaparte," and were on this hunting trip with no companions but two squaws. Bonaparte was a daring man, and it was nothing uncommon for him to start off on just such perilous expeditions as this.

They had been out for nearly two weeks, had "made plenty of meat," and were just preparing to cross the river, and return to their village, when the steamboats hove in sight. After trading sugar and coffee for a supply of meat, they returned to shore; the young Gros Ventre drove the horses up to water, and then turned them loose upon the prairie to feed, while the squaws were preparing to cross over their "plunder" in a bull-boat they had just completed.

The signal-taps on the *Campbell's* bell had been given, when suddenly the Indian women uttered a piercing scream. From the ravines, about a quarter of a mile distant, dashed forth at full speed a Sioux Indian, mounted on a white steed, waving a scarlet blanket, and making directly for the Gros Ventres' horses, followed at a little distance by some fifteen or twenty others, who with whoop and yell, drove off the frightened animals, and disappeared with almost the quickness of thought.

A large body now showed themselves as reserves, but they were not needed, for the terrified squaws were paddling their canoe for dear life, and had almost gained the middle of the river. Bonaparte and his comrade, mounting their horses, which they fortunately held by the lariats, dashed through the willows, and made for a point where we could intercept them.

The *Campbell* moved swiftly around the bend, when the Gros Ventres appeared in sight, and made for the sand-bar, looking over their shoulders as if expecting immediate pursuit. The stage-plank was run out, and a dozen willing hands helped to get the panting horses on board.

The poor Indians had, by this one fell swoop, lost nearly all they possessed; horses, blankets, saddles, meat, all gone; and their lives would also have been forfeited, had it not been for the timely assistance of the steamer. Ammunition, clothing, and provisions were liberally contributed by the passengers, and they were safely landed on the opposite shore, to make their way to their village, which they doubtless effected in safety.

This incident carried conviction to everybody; even to those who, because they did not see Indians constantly, were disposed to regard precautionary measures as useless. So it always is; the more

ignorant persons are of Indian habits and warfare, the more they affect to despise them. The old traders and trappers, who have often been harassed and hunted, and their slumbers rudely broken by the terrible war-whoop in its startling reality, estimate rightly their savage foe, and their excessive caution from this very fact sometimes verges on what might almost be termed cowardice.

The place where this raid occurred was at a point in the river called the "Narrows," directly opposite the old winter-quarters; and the high butte, around the base of which the Sioux swept with their captured horses, was the one from which I had often "discovered" for buffalo with my Indian comrades.

CHAPTER XXXV.

TROUBLE AHEAD — THE STEAMBOATS ATTACKED BY SIOUX — STRANGE PROCEEDINGS — DECK-HANDS MASSACRED — BURIAL — AVENGED — OLD FORT WILLIAM — FORT UNION.

LEAVING Bonaparte and his companion to rejoin their squaws, and trusting to their perfect knowledge of the country to make good their escape, the *Robert Campbell* continued her course up the river, and after rounding the point below Shell Creek, came in sight of the *Shreveport* wooding. As we drew near, a sudden commotion was apparent among her deck-hands, who rushed wildly on board; when she backed out into the stream, and made for the other shore. We followed, as a matter of course, and both steamers were soon made fast alongside of a broad sandbar. We then learned that the *Shreveport* had stopped to wood; and Dauphin, a well-known hunter on board, went out, as was his wont, to look for game. He had proceeded but a short distance, when he discovered a large party of Sioux making their way through the

dense forest, towards the boat. He hurried back and gave the alarm; the hawser was hastily cut, and the boat backed off as we have seen, though not a moment too soon. The rest of the afternoon was spent in piling sacks of flour on the boiler-deck, so as to make an efficient breastwork, and otherwise preparing for defence, as it seemed without doubt that an attack would be attempted every time a stoppage was made for wood.

The next morning soon after sunrise, while running close in shore, a shot was fired, and the ball passed through the pilot-house, narrowly missing Atkins, who was at the wheel.

Later in the morning, Mrs. Culbertson's eagle-eye discovered objects crossing a ridge at a great distance, which, before our glasses could be brought to bear, passed out of sight, leaving us in doubt whether they were elk or mounted Indians. But we were not suffered to remain long in uncertainty. Soon a numerous band of Indians appeared, heading in a direction to intercept our course, and rode along the bank, parallel with the boat. We counted over two hundred, as they appeared strung out in line, which did not seem to be much more than half the number.

The *Shreveport* was some distance ahead, but on dicovering the Indians, dropped down, and both

boats were made fast by a sandbar not far from the mouth of a creek called Tobacco Garden.

The Sioux gathered on the river-bank protected and partially concealed by the thick forest of cottonwood trees.

There was not the slightest attempt at discipline on board of the *Campbell.* Every one seemed acting on his own responsibility, which, in the case of the few mountaineers on board, was decidedly the best possible policy, but highly questionable with the great majority of the passengers to whom Indian fighting was a new experience.

The Indians called out for the whites to come ashore, and be killed; that they wanted provisions, arms and ammunition; that the whites were dogs, and only fit to be killed.

There were at least half a dozen on board who understood Sioux, besides Mrs. Culbertson, herself an Indian woman; therefore there could be no possible misunderstanding as to their designs. Somebody suggested the plan of sending out a boat to bring several of the leading men on board, to "*talk*" with them, and as neither of the Indian Agents appeared to have any ideas of their own to advance, this extraordinarily senseless advice was acted upon. Meanwhile, the Indians gathered on the bank, shouting forth their defiance and taunts

to the whites. All the passengers had taken position behind the breastwork of flour-sacks; Jerry Millington, (who had formerly been a trader on the Platte,) Louis Elle, myself, and several other mountaineers, were close together; Col. Culbertson and his wife a short distance from us.

Presently, to the unutterable surprise of nearly every one on board, a boat put off from the steamer, and headed for the bank upon which the Indians were gathered. To our greater surprise, the Agent, who should gladly have embraced this opportunity of ascertaining the views of his "red children," and inflicting upon them an edifying "talk," was not along. When the boat first left the steamer, Mrs. Culbertson called out to the hands, "Come back, come back! you'll all be killed;" but her remonstrance was unheeded or unheard. The men bent to their oars lustily, and neared the fatal shore. As the boat touched, the Indians crowded together in an ominous manner. Millington remarked to me, as we stood side by side, with our guns levelled, "There'll be h——ll raised shortly."

The Chief springs from the bank, and entering the boat, shakes hands cordially with the crew as he passes along. But in a moment a score of dusky forms leap after him. A puff of white smoke—the gleaming of weapons—the falling of the

slaughtered men, tell the tale. The fire is opened from both steamers, and kept up actively for several minutes. When the smoke clears away, we know by the hurried movement among the Indians that the fire has not been without effect.

Water would be hastily brought from the river, to allay the thirst of the wounded, and dead and struggling horses could be distinctly seen. The boat was drifting down stream, and a cry was raised that one man was clinging to the stern. Another boat, manned by willing hands, was soon in pursuit, and overtaking, returned with it and its melancholy load of gory corpses, which were carefully brought on board, shot and mangled in a horrible manner. Two only of the crew escaped: one, badly wounded, who by falling feigned death; and the steersman, who with wonderful presence of mind threw himself overboard, and clinging to the stern of the boat with one hand, supported himself as he floated down, until rescued. The prompt fire from the steamers covered his retreat.

So reluctant were these unfortunate men to start on that fatal trip, that the mate was obliged to *drive* them into the yawl with an axe. He himself was afterwards killed in a street brawl in Cincinnati. The wounded man, as I learned the following year from Millington, contrary to all expectation, recovered.

Occasional shots were thrown into the point, and at last the Indians left, and halted upon the open bank, about half a mile below. They seemed to be taking care of their wounded, of whom they must have had quite a number; but the small rifled cannon of the *Shreveport* sent its balls so close, that ere long a heavy cloud of dust betokened their departure in the direction of their camp.

The following day the dead were given a decent sepulture by the river's bank, and stones piled on their lonely graves to protect them from the wolves. The eight Indians murdered near Fort Randall were avenged.

Many ludicrous incidents occurred during the skirmish, but with few exceptions, all behaved with great coolness and steadiness. It was certainly a miracle that no one was injured on board, for a great many guns were discharged without their owners being always ready, but invariably with deadly effect, if their own statements could be depended on. A burly Irishman, who had taken position just behind Millington and myself, closed his eyes, and turning his head, discharged his revolver with the firm conviction that he was materially aiding to repulse the savages. Four of the six balls penetrated a sack of flour between us. We almost held our breath while this was going on, and Louis Elle, totally disregarding the Indians in

front, attentively watched this fresh danger in the rear, and relieved his pent-up indignation after it was all over, by a volley of "sacr-r-res" at the expense of the unfortunate Hibernian.

The mouth of the Yellowstone was reached without any further adventures. Of old Fort William nothing was standing save a chimney or two, and portions of the crumbling adobe walls.

Fort Union became the termination of the voyage, as the river had fallen too low to venture higher up, and the freight having all been landed and stored in the Fort, the steamers turned their bows homewards, and were soon out of sight.

Mr. Hodgkiss (formerly in charge of Fort Clark) was now in command of this Post, and in the kindest manner tendered all the hospitality and assistance in his power, to those passengers who were disappointed in getting to Fort Benton by steamer.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FORT UNION AS IT WAS — SCENERY — A SOCIAL CIRCLE — DANGEROUS HUNTING-GROUNDS — GRIZZLY BEARS — INDIANS AROUND — HORSES STOLEN — IN A BAD PREDICAMENT — AFOOT!

FORT Union is built on a high gravelly bank, about six miles above the mouth of the Yellowstone. It was formerly, during the palmy days of the Fur Company, the great distributing Post for the Northwest, and in the spring of the year, when the Traders from the Crow and Blackfeet Indians would rendezvous with the proceeds of the winter's hunt, was the centre of the greatest bustle and activity. The wild mountaineers held high carnival, which reached its culmination upon the arrival of the annual steamboat, after which they took their departure for their respective Posts, with their supplies in Mackinaw boats drawn by the tedious *cordelle*, to enter anew upon their perilous calling.

But these times have passed away. The gradual

approach of civilization, the increasing ease with which steamers navigate the river, the competition of rival companies, have gradually changed the character of the trade. Fort Union, in 1863, was (and had been for several years past) simply a Post for the Assinniboine Indians, and as they are notoriously poor robe-makers, its trade had fallen away very considerably.

Enough men only were retained to take care of the Post, and the constant presence of Sioux war-parties rendered it impossible to keep stock of any kind, or even to venture out with safety.

The Fort had been erected with great care and strength. The bastions were of stone, and the massive and substantial pickets were braced and secured in the strongest manner. The Bourgeois' house and offices, an ornamental two-storied building, fronted on the large and spacious area. Around its hospitable board and on its balcony, during the pleasant summer evenings, was gathered a social circle. The Bourgeois, Mr. Hodgkiss, and his son William, (who had been educated in St. Louis by Father De Smet, and was now acting as clerk,) Col. Culbertson and his wife, Col. Vaughan, Jack Culbertson, and myself. Stories of wild adventure, varied by songs from the ever-ready Col. Vaughan, beguiled the time, and it was late before we thought

of retiring, leaving no one astir but the guard, as he made his solitary rounds.

The quarters assigned to me were in the bastion, which commanded a most extensive and delightful view. Below the Fort was a heavily wooded point, while above the large timber had been nearly all cut away for fuel and building materials. At my feet rolled the Missouri,—beyond, a growth of cottonwoods, walled in by high and steep bluffs. In another direction a line of trees marked the winding course of the Yellowstone. A beautiful prairie stretched away to the rear, until it was lost at the base of a line of sloping hills. One of the loftiest of these was known as McKenzie's Butte, after the late Kenneth McKenzie of St. Louis, who ruled supreme at Fort Union in the early days of the Fur Company.

From its summit the smoke of the annual steamboat could be seen nearly two days before she reached the Fort, as she wound her devious way up the river. The ruins of Fort William were in plain sight, and the mountaineers spoke regretfully of the good old times when both Posts were in the full tide of success, and of the hospitalities that were so freely exchanged between them when the trading season was over. At one time quite a herd of cows was kept here, and the luxury of fresh butter

was indulged in. A garden was also cultivated by the employés, and potatoes, melons, and vegetables generally were raised without difficulty, and in sufficient abundance to vary agreeably the regular diet of buffalo-meat.

But the attacks of the Sioux became more and more frequent, the remainder of the cattle were sent to Fort Benton, and the little garden abandoned and overgrown with weeds.

Mr. Hodgkiss was a very agreeable companion, having been in this country many years. He first came up as clerk for Captain Bonneville, and was an active participant in many exciting scenes in early trapping-days, having been stationed at nearly every Post on the river. He was in charge of Fort Clark, at the Riccaree Village, when I came into the country in 1858. As there were no Indians encamped in the vicinity of the Fort, we were entirely dependent upon the hunters of the Post for fresh meat. This was a service of real danger, for we never knew, when they went forth in the morning, whether we should see them return again at night. Buffalo were usually found quite close, but as the prairies around had been burned by the Sioux, it was necessary to go some distance.

John Wallace was the principal hunter since old José Ramisie had lost one of his hands by the burst-

ing of his gun. Previous to that accident, José was one of the very best "runners" in that part of the country. Wallace was brave even to foolhardiness, and the following spring paid the penalty of his rashness with his life.

He, Jack Culbertson, and myself, with a voyageur to drive the cart, made frequent hunting excursions, and always went out with the chances pretty even of falling in with Indians or buffalo. Yet such is the fascination of this kind of life that we preferred taking these chances occasionally, to being always confined to the Fort. On one of these expeditions, about eight miles from the Post, we passed by a pile of stones painted with vermilion, and surmounted by a bundle of arrows and a buffalo-skull, which had been erected by the Assinniboines as a landmark. A short distance beyond, we fell in with buffalo. An indefinable sense of danger seemed common to us all. Jack and I carefully swept the country with our glasses to discover danger, while Wallace undertook to "approach." The buffalo seemed unaccountably wild, and after a vain attempt to get within range, he came back and expressed his fears that there were Indians about. We accordingly determined to give up the hunt for that day, and returned. When we struck the trail leading to the Fort, and came to the pile of stones before

noticed, we found that our apprehensions had not proved groundless. The stones were scattered about, the skull thrown to one side, and the arrows broken and strewn around, showing conclusively that a war-party had passed by, and narrowly missed us. They might, or might not be close by. We moved on cautiously, and taking advantage of the country, succeeded in safely regaining the Post long after nightfall.

It was perilous to go any distance, no matter how short, without being fully armed, and a guard was kept up night and day. Still, in spite of all this vigilance, several of the men had hair-breadth escapes.

The river was falling fast, and the broad sand-bars became daily more exposed, upon which the carcasses of buffaloes frequently lodged, offering a tempting bait to the grizzly bears, which were abundant in the points around the Yellowstone.

On one occasion a huge grizzly ventured so close to the "cut" bank below the Fort, that some half-dozen of us, seizing our rifles, approached, covered by the thick undergrowth, and the only intimation the monster had of our proximity was a discharge of weapons, which stretched him out at the first fire. Well it might, for the distance was only a few paces, and the thick bushes and steep bank effectually prevented him from seeing us.

The small band of horses, some seventeen head, were objects of constant solicitude. They were guarded by a couple of Indian boys, and were kept in the bottom not more than a quarter of a mile distant. It was only when they were safely corralled for the night that we felt as if they really belonged to us. Two were my individual property, and I was anxious to get them in good order, preparatory to making a trip to Fort Benton and over the mountains. Jack Culbertson and Wallace intended accompanying me, and were likewise saving up their horses for the journey.

The band had been driven up at noon to water, and the guards delayed unusually long in taking them back to pasture. Mr. Hodgkiss finally came from his office, and after briefly expressing his opinion as to the impossibility of horses getting very fat upon gravel-stones, hurried the boys off with their charge. As they passed through the gates, Jack proposed to me to see how the feed was where the horses were kept, and throwing our rifles over our shoulders we sallied forth. We spent more than an hour with them, and felicitated ourselves upon the prospect of being able to start upon our contemplated journey in the course of two weeks. On our way back we set up an old buffalo-skull for a target, and amused ourselves for a while shooting

at it; and then leisurely sauntering back to the Fort, betook ourselves to our respective quarters.

In the course of an hour Jack came over to the bastion, and taking my spy-glass "discovered" a while. In answer to my inquiry, he replied that nearly all the horses were in sight quietly feeding. After some further conversation we spread our robes, and were soon indulging in a comfortable nap.

For some time no traces of Indians had been noticed; all seemed lulled into a sense of security; and I believe that every man around the Fort had retired to enjoy the *dolce far niente*, leaving no one about, except some of the squaws, whose gossiping propensities and Indian restlessness kept them perpetually on the go.

Suddenly a shrill cry from the women aroused all hands, who rushed forth to see what new excitement they had succeeded in getting up on such short notice.

The first objects that met our gaze were the two Indian boys running at full speed towards the Fort, stopping every few paces to wave their blankets over their heads.

By this time the alarm had become general, and all were at the gates, instinctively feeling what had happened. "The Sioux have stolen the horses!"

In a few minutes the panting and frightened boys ran up, and breathlessly told their story. The horses had become a little scattered, and they had just gathered them together, when a number of naked Indians ran out of the bushes and drove the whole band off. One tall warrior told the boys that they did not wish to hurt them; they might make their escape, but must run fast, as there were plenty of Sioux in the bushes. The boys did not stand an instant on the order of their going, but went at once, and with the utmost possible dispatch, arriving as narrated above.

Here was an unlooked-for state of affairs;—afoot totally; not a beast of burden left. Our trip to the Blackfeet must of necessity be abandoned for the present, and the loss of the animals would be seriously felt at the Post.

In this dilemma, now that the horses were stolen, the next best thing was to lock the gates, which was accordingly done; and this last bold foray of the Sioux wholly engrossed the conversation. After being thoroughly talked over, it was the universal opinion that they would take their departure, as there was nothing further to be gained; and all we could do would be to await the development of events.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CAUGHT NAPPING — THE FORT SURPRISED — NARROW ESCAPE — GROS VENTRES OF THE PRAIRIE — ANNUITIES DEMANDED — INDIAN AGENTS — OBTAIN HORSES — LEAVE THE INDIAN COUNTRY — ARRIVE AT THE GOLD MINES OF MONTANA.

NONE slept the less soundly, and the guards reported the next morning that nothing had transpired on their watches. After breakfast, all recollection of the raid of the previous day seemed to have faded away, and the situation was tacitly accepted by everyone. Some of the men went to the lower point to cut firewood as usual; Col. Culbertson started for his customary walk out on the prairie, with his little son Joe, and the rest disposed of themselves as best suited their convenience. I retired to my favorite place in the bastion, and began cleaning my weapons, more for occupation than because they really needed it. My revolver first claimed my care, and having reloaded it, I took my gun apart, and after washing the barrels thoroughly, left them to dry. While waiting, I

reclined on my robe and revolved in my mind the chances of some Assinniboines making their appearance, and our being possibly able thereby to obtain more horses. It was the autumn of the year — the latter part of September — and flocks of wild fowl were flying south every day, so there was nothing strange or unusual in the sounds that saluted my ears. The little half-breed children were playing around the bastion, and as it was the most natural thing in the world for them to have a crying spell for some real or imaginary grief, I reclined on my robe, and freely indulged in speculations. But all at once it occurred to me that the wild fowl were very slow in passing over, and the children seemed to have taken to crying most lustily in chorus. In a half-hesitating manner I stepped out upon the gallery. What a sight met my gaze! The whole sandbar seemed literally alive with naked savages, who, with bounding strides, were making directly for the Fort! It was from them that the cry of the wild-fowl proceeded, and a most life-like imitation it was. It was their startling appearance that caused the little children to huddle in a frightened, crying group under the bastion. But there were human beings in a still more perilous situation! The cook had gone out to the edge of the sandbar with a couple of large kettles, to get his usual supply of

water for culinary purposes. His squaw accompanied him, carrying her small infant on her back, after the fashion of Indian women. They had reached the river, when a casual glance discovered the Sioux coming out of the upper point, and crawling under cover of the high bank, intending to surprise the Fort, which the unexpected appearance of the cook alone prevented. With piercing screams they turned to flee, but in spite of their utmost efforts the Sioux were rapidly gaining on them. The terrified children screamed in chorus, and stood paralyzed with fright.

This was the position of affairs when I appeared on the gallery. Unfortunately my gun was not in order for service, but hastily snatching my revolver, I fired.

From my elevation, and the hurried aim, the ball dropped a little, striking one of the Sioux on the leg, and inflicting a flesh-wound only. I rapidly discharged the remaining barrels at the Indians who were nearest the unfortunate fugitives. One brawny fellow had even raised his tomahawk to strike the woman, when my balls whistling close to his head, checked him in full career. The shots and outcries roused the men, who seizing their guns, rushed out and began firing away with a will.

The instant they found themselves discovered, the

Sioux retreated for the cover of the bank, and were soon safe, except a few who were compelled to run the gauntlet across the sandbar. The extraordinary leaps they took, alone saved their lives; as it was, the balls whistled extremely close. One seemed to bear a charmed life, for he effected his escape notwithstanding a dozen shots were sent specially for him.

The wood-choppers hearing the fray, came hurrying back in wild alarm, and when the particulars were fully known, the escape of all seemed miraculous. Godereau, the blacksmith, and another man had gone up in the point that very morning to hunt, and had not returned a great while before the attack was made. The Indians in ambush most probably saw them, but did not wish to discover themselves, or run the risk of giving an alarm, when the opportunity of taking the Fort was before them.

Old José Ramisie was off fishing, about midway between the Fort and the upper point, whence he was slowly returning. Passing up a small hollow, he happened to look behind, when he saw several Sioux stealing upon him. He ran as fast as he could, and when the firing from the bastion checked the enemy, he eluded the pursuit.

The cook with his squaw and child had truly a

most narrow escape. A moment more, and they had been butchered, and the Indians once inside the Fort, would have had everything their own way. They had laid their plans well, and had nearly caught us napping, so confident were we that they had gone off after stealing our horses.

By afternoon the Sioux crossed the river above, and soon after showed themselves on the heights opposite, though of course far out of reach. They made the most taunting signals by flashing back the sun's rays from the small mirrors they carried suspended from their necks, to the luckless whites they had unhorsed. By the aid of a glass, we could easily recognize our own horses, and I had the sorry satisfaction of seeing a Sioux warrior most complacently bestriding my bonnie bay; while Wallace's imprecations upon the race in general, when he beheld a brawny Indian on his favorite mule, would have been highly edifying under almost any other circumstances.

The squaws in the Fort were greatly exercised by all these proceedings, and the one whose life I had so opportunely been instrumental in saving, presented me with an elegantly garnished pair of moccasins. In a few days everything quieted down as usual, and although no Indians showed themselves, still that was no reason why they might not be

hovering around. We had no more horses for them to steal, and were unable to go off to hunt.

This is only another instance to show the necessity of *untiring* vigilance in the Indian Country. Every person connected with the Post had more or less experience in Indian habits, and so sure did we feel that they had gone off, that the *very next morning* after our horses had been stolen, the gates of the Fort were opened as usual, and the men dispersed to their ordinary employments.

During the whole of my residence in the West, both before and since, this was the only time that my weapons were not all in order for instant service. I had only emptied my gun to clean it, and was drying it when the attack was made, not more than an interval of twenty minutes.

The Indians knew the moment they were discovered, that there was not the slightest chance for them to get inside the Fort; but had they succeeded, no resistance, however desperate, would have been of the slightest avail. The whole affair was over in a few minutes, and as living in scenes of constant danger quickly becomes second nature, the excitement it caused soon subsided, and was regarded as rather a pleasant break in the monotony of the daily routine. Not long after these events, a large party of mounted Indians was discovered slowly

approaching. They proved to be Gros Ventres of the Prairie, (a band of Blackfeet,) under their celebrated chief the *Femme-Assit*, and had come a long distance, through an enemy's country, expressly to receive their annuities, which, consequent upon the failure of the boat to get to Fort Benton, were stored in Fort Union.

Being a friendly tribe, they were of course received inside the Fort; Col. Culbertson, and his wife Mrs. No-ta-wis-ta Culbertson, were well known to them. The Gros Ventres, it seems, only a few days before, while on their way, fell in with and defeated a large war-party of Sioux, who had doubtless been hovering in the vicinity of the Yellowstone.

The Agent for these Indians, the Rev. Mr. Reed, had returned on the *Campbell*, leaving the annuities here simply on storage. In this dilemma, what was to be done? The Indians had come a long distance, through a dangerous country, expressly to receive their annuities, and to refuse them would be to invite consequences which we were not prepared to meet. They had every right to expect to see the accredited Agent of the Government; but that official had hurried back to the more peaceful scenes of civilized life. The Indians were beginning to be pressing in their demands, and finally Col. Vaughan drew up a paper to be forwarded to

the Department, detailing the state of the case, and the necessity of delivering the annuities, which was also signed by Col. Culbertson and myself.

Mr. Hodgkiss then turned over the annuities to the Femme-Assit, who, aided by his chiefs, proceeded to distribute them, without the stereotyped talk of their "Father;" upon which deliverance they might well be congratulated. We were fortunate in obtaining from them a few animals, to partially supply the places of those we had recently lost.

This leaving the country and the Traders at the very time the services of an Indian Agent were most needed, requires no comment.

Not long after this, I left the Yellowstone country for the Western slope of the Rocky Mountains, and the new gold-fields of Idaho, (now Montana.) No Indians were seen, until we fell in with a Crow camp on Milk River. These thieving vagabonds were very troublesome, and nothing prevented a serious difficulty but the proximity of the Femme-Assit's camp, some thirty miles higher up. Extricating ourselves from these fellows, we arrived safely at Fort Benton, and going on to Sun River, some sixty miles further, stopped with Malcolm Clark, to rest our horses a few days before crossing the mountains. The lofty peaks of the Rocky

Mountains, majestic in their winter scenery, were passed. The temperature was delightful; and sheltered from the fierce winds of the bleak and open plains, it seemed as though we were approaching a more southern clime. Lingering by pleasant streams filled with abundance of the finest trout, we reached the beautiful valley of the Deer Lodge. Then on again, until another spur of the Mountains is crossed; past the "Big Hole," where the river seems to have tunnelled itself a passage under the mountain, and the fertile valley of the Stinking Water is spread out before our eyes.

Ranches are dotted over its surface, and long ox-trains move slowly to and fro. Up the narrow Alder Gulch, until the cabins hastily erected here and there, and the piles of upturned earth, show that at last we are among the Gold-Diggers.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MINING CAMPS — "ROAD AGENTS" — A CONVIVIAL GATHERING — INNOCENT PASTIMES — THE CLIMAX — THE VIGILANCE COMMITTEE — THE FINALE — PROSPEROUS TIMES — SALT LAKE CITY.

IN July, 1863, a few tents and brush shanties, scattered throughout Alder Gulch, marked the beginning of a settlement. The magic touch of gold soon reared two bustling towns, with stores, saloons, and the usual accompaniments of "civilization."

The first was Nevada City, and one mile from it, higher up the gulch, another and larger place was fast springing up. It was at first decided to call this new settlement *Verena*, after the wife of Jeff. Davis, but more sensible counsels prevailed, and it was finally changed to Virginia City. As there was a bustling town of the same name in the Territory (now State) of Nevada, this was not the most judicious selection that could have been made.

In the restless, eager population, the great ma-

jority gathered from the frontiers, from Colorado, California, and Oregon, the "rough" element predominated. Highway robberies were committed with alarming frequency; and one of the most formidable bands of "Road Agents" ever organized made it a hazardous undertaking to leave the Territory with gold dust, without being plundered, perhaps murdered.

After dark, the respectable portion of the population remained indoors, leaving the roughs in undisputed possession of the streets and saloons. These worthies had it all their own way, discharging pistols right and left with the most reckless indifference.

On one occasion, just before the culminating point was reached, the "Idaho Billiard Hall" was the scene of a "gay and infestive" gathering. Every passer-by was laid hold of and invited in to "take a drink;" and no excuses being available, complaisance was the only alternative. The "fun" after a while took another turn, and waxed fast and furious. Pistols were discharged, glasses shivered, and a generous rivalry ensued as to who could display the greatest accuracy in shooting a ball through his neighbor's hat without "raising a hair." The barkeeper, with pallid face and lips forced into a ghastly smile, waited upon his guests with well-

simulated alacrity, as if he really enjoyed these Pandemonium revels; and when a "tough cuss" requested him to "charge that ere, will you," never for an instant questioned his credit.

While these festivities were in progress, business was of course paralyzed. The merchants devoutly wished that the ruffians might in this case emulate the praiseworthy example of the Kilkenny cats, and the "honest miners" shook their heads most ominously. At the theatre, (for even at that early day Thespis too had her votaries,) startling brawls were of frequent occurrence, and the click of the ready pistol was the signal for a tumultuous rush to the doors, and general scattering of the audience. So bold had these outlaws become in their unchecked excesses, that they planned a general pillage of every store in the place that was supposed to contain any amount of gold dust.

Matters had reached such a pass that it was now simply a question whether order and decency should prevail, or the town be given up to the mercy of outlaws and desperadoes. A few of the leading men met together; the initiatory steps were taken; and in December, 1863, the celebrated Vigilance Committee was fully organized, embracing among its members the stanchest and truest of the merchants and miners; for if the young Territory was

degraded by the presence of many who were the vilest refuse of the frontiers, she could proudly claim also many high-toned, honorable men, to whose self-sacrificing efforts alone is due the credit of reducing order out of chaos. The greatest care was taken in the selection and admission of members; and the proceedings of the Committee were always characterized by the coolest judgment and calmest deliberation.

One evening shortly before the time selected for the general pillaging of the stores, there was an unusual gathering of roughs, and several disturbances occurred at the theatre. By the following morning every avenue leading from the town, and all the surrounding heights, were so guarded that it was impossible to pass unchallenged. Determined countenances appeared on the streets. Bands of armed men began to gather; from the Summit, from the Highlands, from Nevada they came, earnest and serious, for a grave duty lay before them. Business of every kind was suspended — the miners left the sluices — the gamblers the saloons. The roughs, with a vague feeling of uneasiness at this unexpected turn of affairs, became as gentle as lambs inquiring most innocently, — "What's up? — What's the matter?" Those who knew, said nothing; those who did not, ap-

peared apprehensive, and more than one individual, whose only error was in being "hail fellow well met" with everybody, kept closely within-doors, on the plea of "not feeling well" and "having taken a dose of physic recently."

Directly squads of men start off to search certain houses, and in a short time return, dragging with them the objects of their hunt.

Five have been secured, and are taken under strong guard to a store which has been selected as headquarters for this occasion. Their doom was sealed before they were arrested. Time is given these miserable wretches to prepare for the last great change. From a partially finished building, chosen as the place of execution, five nooses are already hanging

At last the sad procession moves, surrounded by a strong guard to prevent any possibility of rescue. The condemned are led to the gallows, and five corpses are soon swinging, a terrible but just warning to all.

But the efforts of the Committee did not rest here. The country was scoured in every direction, some being pursued as far as Oregon before they were overtaken, and a long rope and short shrift was given to the ruffians and desperadoes. It was not however until after the execution of Henry

Plummer, who was filling the office of sheriff at Bannock City, and who was also at the same time the secret head of the organized band of robbers, that the citizens became fully aware of the wide-spread danger that had threatened, and from which they had just escaped, solely through the exertions of the Vigilantes, to whom Montana owes a lasting debt of gratitude. Order reigned supreme; the streets became as quiet and safe as those in any old-settled country, and the carrying of deadly weapons, which had been the universal practice, was discouraged and discountenanced by the better class of citizens.

In course of time, when civil law extended its sway, the Committee, without disbanding and without solicitation, gracefully yielded to the legal authorities. But red tape was too slow to grasp with the fast rising evil, and the Vigilantes, compelled to resume active operations, soon quelled the growing lawlessness.

Buildings went up like magic. Alder Gulch was yielding its treasure in fabulous quantities, and the palmy days of the Golden State seemed to be revived. Everybody had money; everybody was rich; a ragged miner would pour his gold from a plethoric sack, and bet at faro, well knowing that his rich claim would soon reimburse him for his losses.

In February, 1864, I started for Salt Lake, with a party sufficiently strong to bid defiance to any Road Agents we might chance to meet, and after a toilsome journey of fourteen days arrived at the City of the Saints.

Several of the party as well as animals suffered severely from snow-blindness, and in the whole distance of nearly four hundred and fifty miles (by the then travelled route) there were but three ranches after leaving the mining "settlements." Our provisions became completely exhausted three days before we reached the Mormon settlements on Bear River.

Late at night, after a most toilsome journey through the deep snow, we were greeted by the welcome sight of sparks flying from the chimneys.

Our hardships were at an end, and before a blazing fire, and around the well-spread board of a hospitable Mormon, we quickly forgot past trials, while our jaded animals regaled themselves with the unwonted luxuries of hay and oats.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE MORMONS—BRIGHAM YOUNG—A PROFITABLE RELIGION —THE SALT LAKE HOUSE — GETTING OVER A DIFFICULTY —THE GENTILE CLUB — EVIDENCES OF INCREASING PROSPERITY.

TOO much praise cannot be awarded to the Mormons for the beautiful city they have reared upon a desert site. Twenty years ago the weary travellers halted, and determined that here they would establish a new home for themselves, one in which they hoped to remain in undisturbed seclusion. Among them were artificers in the various trades, and year after year their settlement grew, until it became a city of goodly proportions.

Adobe houses took the place of tents, and in course of time stores and dwellings of imposing dimensions were erected. As years rolled round, and the Northern mines began to yield up their golden treasure, the Gentiles found the more temperate climate of Utah, and the hospitalities of its saintly city, an agreeable change from the monotony of their own snow-bound land.

Brigham Young, with the keen forethought characteristic of him, was quick to perceive the advantages that must ensue from this liberal expenditure of Gentile gold. With this end in view, the Presidency purchased the Salt Lake House, and sent Townsend, its former proprietor, on a three-years mission to England to obtain proselytes. The hotel was now in the hands of the "Church," and Feramorz Little, a son-in-law of the Prophet, installed as host. A comfortable homelike inn it was, with a table bountifully supplied with substantial cheer.

But there was still a great deficiency, which however was not long suffered to remain unsupplied. The Mormon regulation against the sale of spirituous liquors is very stringent, and it was only the initiated few who were able to procure their rations of "valley tan," as the native distilled whiskey is called. But the Presidency soon cut this Gordian knot. As the hotel where the Gentiles most did congregate was now under the fostering care of the Church, why should not its revenue be increased by all possible expedients? Did not the end justify the means? A bar-room was accordingly opened, where, by appointment of the Prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, a Mormon barkeeper dispensed "valley tan" and other spirituous compounds to thirsty Gentiles. Several years later,

when, instead of a solitary stranger, the overland stages from the East and from California, and Idaho and Montana, rolled into Salt Lake, loaded with passengers, the Gentiles felt the need of a place of resort, where they could assemble entirely free from the restraints of Mormon espionage. An enterprising genius, in the winter of 1866, started a club-room, to which none but properly introduced Gentiles were admitted. American drinks were dispensed in American fashion, and the club was not suffered to languish for want of billiard and card tables. A "constitution" was adopted which all were expected to sign. The worthy proprietor or manager sat by the door, which he kept securely fastened, reconnoitring all comers through a small wicket, and admitting none but regularly qualified members. The Mormons were greatly exercised about this club, which was after all nothing but a social exchange where the Gentiles could meet and enjoy themselves without restraint. Outside it behooved them to be guarded in both words and actions, as the admirable Mormon police, undistinguishable by badge or uniform, were always hovering around, silent and watchful.

The beautiful theatre, whose stage and appointments will compare favorably with the opera-houses

of our Eastern cities, is also a religious institution, being under the fostering care of the Church.

During my different visits to Salt Lake I noticed each time indications of growing prosperity throughout the valley. The great increase of population in the Northern mines opened up a new and remunerative outlet for their produce. Around their farms comforts greatly multiplied. Fabrics of Eastern make began to take the place of the coarse but serviceable homespun. The women in particular eagerly availed themselves of their increasing wealth to purchase suitable clothing, and comfortable petticoats took the place of skirts made of coffee-sacks. The worn-out wagons that had conveyed their effects from the States years before, were thrown aside to be replaced by new ones, whose owner having disposed of his freight at the mines, was glad to sell his wagons and cattle before returning to the East for a new outfit. Thrift was everywhere apparent.

CHAPTER XL.

APPEARANCE OF SALT LAKE CITY — COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGES — MORMON POETRY — GRAND TEMPLE — MORMON SERMONS — BRIGHAM YOUNG — GEO. A. SMITH — HEBER C. KIMBALL — A SPECIMEN OF MORMON PREACHING.

AT no time of the year does Salt Lake City appear to greater advantage than in the leafy month of June. On each side of the broad avenues, bordered with rows of shade-trees, the crystal streams from the mountains flow through asequias to irrigate the gardens with their life-giving waters. Fruits and vegetables of every variety and the finest quality are raised in profusion.

The blocks of splendid stone stores, and the elegant villas of the leading Mormons, are sure indications of increasing wealth and prosperity, and will compare favorably with those in any of our large Eastern cities.

From its geographical position, its proximity to the gold regions of Idaho and Montana, and lying in the track of the Pacific Railroad, Salt Lake City

seems to combine all the requisites for a great commercial centre.

The increasing influx of strangers, and the authority which it is to be hoped Government will exercise, must render Gentile life and property comparatively safe. The feeling against the Gentiles is very strong on the part of the men, while the women usually look upon them with especial favor, and seem to think the entire possession of one Gentile far preferable to a small and uncertain share of a Latter-Day Saint. The Patriarchs regard the purity of their harems with a jealous eye, and a strict watch is kept upon the movements of the women.

A ditty, which had its origin about the time General Johnston's expedition was on its march to Utah, was extremely popular with the young men, who took particular pleasure in chanting it upon all occasions. It was set to a jingling tune, and the refrain of each verse was—

"The Mormon question in the East is exciting great attention,
The subject is, to say the least, too tough for their digestion."

In which, I regret to say, there is more truth than poetry.

The Tabernacle, in which the Saints at present worship, is an immense hall, with an organ at one end, and platform and reading-desk at the other.

It will easily hold over three thousand persons. The men and women sit separately, and behave with great decorum, although a hearty laugh at some witticism from the pulpit (almost invariably at the expense of the Gentiles) is never considered out of order. The massive foundations of the Grand Temple are necessarily progressing slowly from the solid and substantial character of the work. It will stand, if ever completed, as one of the wonders of the nineteenth century.

Truly original, and scarcely worthy of the name, the sermons are usually resumés of the doings of the Saints in different parts of the Territory, and of the recent travelling adventures of the Bishops, laying special stress upon the bountiful cheer, and always alluding to the banners, flags, and bands of music with which the people turned out to welcome those dignitaries. Vindictive allusions to the Gentiles, verging strongly on buffoonery and vulgarity, and scathing denunciations of apostasy, are always keenly relished.

President Young occasionally delivers himself of the most extraordinary discourses; his disgusting and obscene tirade against the Mormon women wearing that "Gentile abomination of hoops," will never be forgotten by those who heard it.

Bishop George A. Smith, a saint of ponderous dimensions, usually appeals to the people to "support the priesthood, that everything depends upon them;" and his portly, well-fed appearance shows that these exhortations are not in vain.

Heber C. Kimball, who ranks second only to Brigham Young, rarely allows a service to close without displaying his peculiar oratory. During the preceding exercises he is comfortably ensconced in an arm-chair, with his legs elevated in bar-room style upon the railing in front. A huge, red bandanna handkerchief is in constant use, and when not actively employed in keeping off the flies, reverently covers his bald pate. The first time I had the pleasure of hearing him preach, he arose, a thin, spare man, dressed in decorous black, and taking a text, began his discourse in an orthodox style, and full of the same platitudes that have been uttered from time immemorial. I said to myself, "Is it possible that we are going to have an old-fashioned sermon after all?" when, with a defiant wave of the red bandanna, and without the slightest connection with his preceding remarks, he fairly shrieked out, "And they slew Joseph!" (alluding to the expulsion from Nauvoo,) and went on in a bitter and vindictive tirade against all Gentiles, working himself up into a perfect frenzy, as

one might suppose a howling dervish of the East would do.

Such a storm of mingled irony, abuse, and blackguardism it has never been my lot to hear before, and yet this was the usual character of his *sermons!*

In the midst of his fiercest denunciations, several Mormons who occupied the bench in front of me, turned round with a triumphant look, as much as to say, "Them's our sentiments."

After continuing in this strain for some twenty-five minutes, he concluded in a tone that sounded supernaturally calm when contrasted with his previous shrieks, by saying, "I am a Yankee, thank God, but a Yankee of the good old sort; not a Yankee Abolitionist, for a Yankee Abolitionist is the meanest of H——ll. Amen."

The prelate then sat down quite exhausted, as well he might be, and wiped away the perspiration that so copiously streamed down his face with the now glorious red bandanna. A hymn exceedingly well sung by the choir was followed by the benediction, and the vast congregation dispersed.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE PRESIDENCY ON THEIR TRAVELS — THE PROPHET'S BARBER — AN EVENING WITH PRESIDENTS YOUNG AND KIMBALL — FUTURE OF MORMONISM — WHAT THE MORMONS HAVE DONE — THEY ARE ENTITLED TO GREAT PRAISE — OVERLAND STAGES — DRIVERS AND ATTACHÉS — COMFORTS OF HOME STATIONS — DRIVING MULES — CHAIN WHIPS — MUSTANG HORSES — WONDERFUL ENDURANCE OF A COLT.

ON one of my journeys through the settlements I halted for the night at Ogden City, forty miles from Salt Lake. The only public-house in the place was kept by Bishop C. W. West, and a most excellent one it was too. Clean and comfortable, with substantial cheer, it was not hard for the traveller to imagine himself in a pleasant village in one of the far-off Atlantic States. It so happened that Presidents Young and Kimball had just arrived with their retinue on a circular trip through a portion of the territory. The people turned out as usual to welcome them with flags, banners, and music. Highly gratified were the Presidency with the cordiality of their reception, while the people

in their turn were profoundly impressed with the affability of the Prophet and the interest he manifested in their well-being. Pretty, quiet Ogden City was greatly excited by this distinguished visitation, and the yeomanry from the surrounding districts, in their holiday attire, thronged the streets and congregated on the corners, talking over the events of the day. The Prophet's barber (without which functionary he never travels) seemed to regard himself with peculiar complacency, and strutted around with swelling importance, treated by all with unbounded respect, and looked upon by many as holding a position but little short of First Councillor and Confidential Adviser to the High Priest and Prophet of the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints."

During the evening both Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball came into the general sitting-room and entered into conversation with those present. Heber remained some time after the Prophet had retired, talking in his characteristic style, and freely expressing his dislike at so many Gentiles having taken up their abode in Salt Lake. I replied that I thought the Mormons would be immensely benefited by the mining region north of them, and that for several years to come the miners would be in a great degree dependent upon the

products of Utah for subsistence. "Yes," he replied, he supposed they would have to supply them with breadstuffs, "and thank God they had enough for all."

It was very evident, in spite of the pains he took to conceal it, that he viewed the constantly increasing travel through Utah, and the foothold the Gentiles were aiming to secure, with extreme solicitude.

The crafty leaders of the Mormon community have good reason to entertain the liveliest apprehensions for their future. Everything seems to tend to the speedy downfall of Mormonism, and that hitherto vexed question will offer its own solution.

If female suffrage ever extends to Utah, polygamy will certainly be disposed of in the briefest possible time. When Brigham Young dies, there is no one capable of exerting the rare administrative abilities he possesses in so eminent a degree. The whole fabric must fall to the ground.

Some will doubtless emigrate to the Sandwich Islands, where they have founded a colony, in view probably of the time when Salt Lake will no longer be a refuge for them. Disaffections and dissensions among the leaders have already reached alarming proportions, and the first whistle of the locomotive in the Salt Lake Valley will sound the knell of Mormonism.

Their bitterest opponents must however concede that too much credit cannot be awarded to the Mormons for having, by dint of stern perseverance and industry, overcome all difficulties and converted the desert into a fertile land; peopled it with a thrifty community, and reared cities and towns, the chief of which must at no distant day stand in the same rank as New York, St. Louis, and San Francisco, embodiments of American enterprise.

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The journey in the overland stage is not now the formidable undertaking that it once was. The service has greatly improved, and the distance is being lessened every day by the rapid advance of the Pacific Railroad.

A race of drivers and attachés grew up with it, whose exciting and dangerous calling became a second nature to them. Summer and winter, day and night, sunshine or shadow, reckless of danger, the "tough cusses," as these knights of the whip delighted to style themselves, were always ready for the road.

The stock stations averaged about twelve miles, and at the end of every route, usually fifty miles, where the drivers were changed, the place was dignified with the appellation of "Home Station." Here the traveller would have an opportunity of

getting a meal and paying a good round price for it too, which meal seldom consisted of anything more than bacon, bread and coffee. The teams on part of the road were very good; but through the Bitter Creek country, a desert region abounding in sage brush, and alkali flats, mules were mostly used. These poor animals had a hard time of it, as the country afforded very limited supplies of hay, and the pittance of corn fed to them was just enough for a tantalizing reminder of the well-filled mangers of old Missouri. And for a good part of the way they did not even fare so well, but eked out a scanty living upon the sparsely scattered blades of grass.

The question would very naturally arise as to how they contrived to make time with such forlorn teams. The mule-drivers have reduced it to a perfect science. While the stock-tenders are harnessing the team, the driver fills the front boot with a supply of small stones or "rocks," as they are technically termed. The six mules are then attached; the driver gathers up the reins, and with a yell, off they start on a run, which soon settles down to a very sober trot. Now the science of mule-driving is manifested. With an accuracy only attained by long practice, Jehu throws stones at his leaders, rarely failing to hit them just exactly where he wants to, applies the whip vigorously to the

"swings" or middle span, and then belabors the wheelers with a *chain-whip*, an instrument of torture composed of a short handle and a few links of chain for a lash. By the active exercise of these combined efforts the team is worried over the road at an astonishing pace.

The driver of a mule-team on the Bitter Creek country felt highly promoted when transferred to another portion of the route, and a regularly fed string of horse stock was given him.

The California half-breed horses are invaluable in all services where fleet and hardy animals are needed. Tough and wiry, combining the endurance of the mustang with the size and strength of the American horse, and moreover easily kept, they form the only stage-teams in many parts of California, and will run over a ten or fifteen mile route where the same speed would completely use up larger and heavier stock. They have tempers of their own, however, and usually start off kicking, plunging, and bucking. But once off, they keep up their speed without flagging.

In the spring of 1866, I was bringing a band of mustang half-breeds from California. The Mallade River was very high, and the usual ford impassable. After considerable difficulty we got the horses over, and were delayed a couple of hours longer, building

a raft and crossing the saddles and baggage. While thus employed, a cold rain set in, and when ready to start, I found that one of the mares had dropped a foal. We drove on about ten miles further before encamping for the night, crossing several creeks breast-high for the horses, but which the little colt was obliged to swim. The next day he was as well as ever, and travelled on with sublime indifference to anything save the gratification of his keen little appetite. When we started I thought it would be impossible for him to keep up, and drew out my revolver to shoot him. Twice did I raise it, but the little fellow trotted on so cheerily that my heart failed me, and I returned it to the holster. From that time I resolved to take him through, thinking it would never do to destroy an animal of so much pluck. Little "Sage-brush," as I named him, swam every stream, flinched from nothing, and arrived in good order in Montana, a distance of three hundred miles, having travelled every day, from the time he was half an hour old!

CHAPTER XLII.

PAST AND PRESENT — CHANGES — PALMY DAYS OF ALDER GULCH — FORT BENTON — FORT UNION — AMONG THE GROS VENTRES ONCE MORE — SAD CHANGES — FAREWELL TO THE INDIAN COUNTRY — DOWN THE RIVER — GLIMPSES OF CIVILIZATION — ARRIVAL AT ST. LOUIS — END OF MY WANDERINGS.

WHENEVER gold has been discovered, the intermediate changes from the virgin wilderness to a settled country have succeeded each other with magical rapidity. It is not many years since California was almost unknown except in name. Now she is regarded as an old settled State, self-supporting, and even exporting largely of her bounteous harvests to supply the necessities of the Old World. All within a few years! But of the early settlers in a new country, how few see their golden visions fully realized. The profusion of treasure — the reckless expenditure — the ever shifting, population, carry them along in their whirl.

Nowhere do these reflections appear more forcible than in Montana. This young territory, nestled as it were in the very heart of the Rocky Mountains, in the shelter of whose grassy valleys the trapping

"brigades" loved to winter. Game abounded on every side; the rippling streams were full of delicious trout, and the winter passed in happy seclusion, varied occasionally by an encounter with some predatory band of Indians. How eagerly would they await the arrival of the annual supplies transported from St. Louis on pack-animals, at an expenditure of toil and hardship which the traveller of the present day by steam-car and mail-stage can scarcely realize.

Throughout these "happy hunting-grounds," and on the sides of the snowy mountains, populous mining towns have arisen. The whistle of the steam-engine and the clangor of the quartz-mill are the sounds that now break the silence of the wilderness, instead of the whoop of the mountaineer, and the war-cry of the Indian.

On many of the dimpled trout-streams saw-mills are located, and the fair and smiling valleys are dotted with ranches and herds of cattle, the first step to farm-houses and cultivated fields.

No longer do the snow-clad barriers of the Rocky Mountains deter the traveller from attempting their passage in midwinter, and daily stages, with ranches every few miles, deprive the journey of its hardships. Stately steamers ply on the Columbia River, once navigated only by the barge of the Fur-traders,

amid difficulties so graphically described by Lewis and Clark, and Irving in "Astoria," and Bonneville's "Far West."

The Great Salt Lake, once regarded almost as a myth, is now the centre of a populous and thrifty community. In a few years, when the Pacific Railroad will be completed, a tour to the magnificent domes of the Yo-Semite and the mysterious Falls of Snake River ought to be more popular than the hackneyed trip across the ocean to the old, old world, with its cities and scenes the same to-day as they were centuries ago.

Towns have sprung up in these new countries like magic — and have gone down as rapidly. Virginia City and its twin sister, Nevada, during the summer of 1864, were the embodiments of prosperous mining camps. Few, if any, gulches in the whole history of gold-mining have ever proved richer than the famous Alder Gulch in its palmy days.

The sluices "cleaned up" enormously, the miners were prodigal in their expenditure, all classes of trade flourished, and the saloons and dance-houses were crowded to overflowing. With the approach of winter this was changed. Mining was impracticable until the return of spring; many left for the States and Salt Lake, and parties scattered forth in various directions to prospect.

New placer diggings were found; new towns sprang up, and the sparse population of the territory was still further scattered.

With the opening of spring, the miners anticipated another prosperous season. But the snows of winter lay heavily on the mountains at the head of Alder Gulch. The increasing power of the sun's rays melted them rapidly and swelled the creek to an impetuous torrent. Claims were filled up with gravel, and ruined in a single night.

Piles of pay-dirt ready for the sluices were swept away and mingled with the débris of former seasons. The whole gulch from the summit to the mouth was one vast scene of ruin. Mines that had paid handsome returns were abandoned, as the expense of getting them in order was perhaps greater than the gold they contained. Thousands of miners were thus thrown out of employment, and went to the other gulches or prospected on their own account. Nevada was almost wholly abandoned,—its deserted houses were gradually torn down for firewood, and the contrast from the former busy, driving season was sad to contemplate.

The following year the same experience was repeated, spite of all efforts to protect the few claims in working order, and the gulch was virtually abandoned. Virginia City, with its many large and

handsome buildings, resembled a deserted village — the mines by which it was supported were ruined.

But the surrounding mountains are rich in gold and silver quartz, and when skill and capital aid in their development, will doubtless yield abundantly.

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Fort Benton, in the summer of 1866, was no longer the solitary Trading-Post in the very heart of the wilderness. The populous mining town of Helena was only a hundred and fifty miles distant; warehouses and stores, to accommodate the vast amount of freight constantly being landed here during the season of navigation, had been erected, and instead of the camps of Blackfeet Indians, large trains of freight-wagons were corralled, awaiting their turn to load. The American Fur Company had disposed of all their interest in the country, and the sun of the Fur Traders had set forever.

Swiftly down-stream sped the steamer on which I had embarked, passing the wild and weird scenery for which the Upper Missouri is so justly celebrated.

At Fort Union, where we landed for a few minutes only, there was very little apparent change, and some few of the old retainers were still about.

The mouth of the Yellowstone was passed, and on the site of old Fort William soldiers were encamped building a new Post, Fort Buford.

Down the river, past familiar scenes, until the well-remembered village of the Minnetarees came in sight. Here the hand of change was most manifest. Soldiers were quartered in our old Fort, and the armed sentinel pacing before its closed gates, presented a strange contrast to the times when the Indians came and went as they pleased

During the short time we remained here I had the pleasure of greeting many of my former acquaintances. Pierre Garreau, Malnouri, and old Jeff Smith were still living where they had passed so many years. My Gros Ventre friends gathered around me asking a thousand questions, and were extremely solicitous for me to return to them again. Death had made many sad changes. The Four-Bears had been killed by a party of Sioux while bathing in the little creek about a mile back of the village. They made a sudden charge, and the high banks prevented his seeing them until they were close upon him. True to his name and warrior-training, he fought desperately, and was slain almost in sight of his own lodge

Doctor E-ten-ah-pen-ah was drowned while swimming the Missouri, in a vain attempt to escape from the enemy. The Raising-Heart, old Snakeskin, the Bobtail-Wolf and Bear-Hunter were also dead, and several of the younger warriors and squaws.

Many who had been my intimate associates were gone, and the Trading-Post was occupied by soldiers.

The Indians, despondent about their future, complained bitterly of the increasing scarcity of buffalo and the number of their enemies.

An hour slips by unheeded, but the hawsers are at length cast loose, and with a hurried shake of the hand I leap aboard.

Farewell — perhaps forever. Until the bend of the river at last shuts out the elm-point, the stretch of prairie, the grazing bands of horses, do I steadfastly fix my gaze on the well-remembered scene.

Down, down the river. Not a stick left of the once large and populous Riccaree village. The prairie, green and grassy, as if it had never afforded sustenance to hundreds of Indian horses. Of old Fort Pierre not a vestige could be seen. No skin lodges dotted the prairie,— no Indian squaw followed her warrior with a load of robes to trade,— no sign of life save a solitary raven, dark and dreary, flying ominously about.

Down, down the river. The cabins of the settlers begin to appear. Fences and fields of corn — towns and villages — Omaha City with its Pacific Railroad, and at last the boat rounds to at the broad levee at St. Louis. The passengers scatter on their respective ways, and my eight years of wandering in the West are ended.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE INDIAN QUESTION.

"I beheld the westward marches
Of the unknown, crowded nations.
All the land was full of people,
Restless, struggling, toiling, striving,
Speaking many tongues, yet feeling
But one heart-beat in their bosoms.
In the woodlands rang their axes,
Smoked their towns in all the valleys,
Over all their lakes and rivers
Rushed their great canoes of thunder.
Then a darker, drearier vision
Passed before me, vague and cloud-like:
I beheld our nations scattered,
All forgetful of my counsels,
Weakened, warring with each other;
Saw the remnants of our people
Sweeping westward wild and woful,
Like the cloud-rack of a tempest,
Like the withered leaves of autumn!"

THE unfortunate accident of having been born with a black skin, while it does not of itself imply the deficiency of human attributes, has nevertheless been made a pretext for oppressing a race of fellow-beings, whose claims were unheeded

until triumphantly vindicated by the result of a long and bloody civil war. Scarcely has the country begun to recover from the exhausting conflict, ere another race, whose kindred misfortune it is to have a red skin, demands aid and protection. Lineal descendants of the original possessors of the soil, instead of passively suffering under the lash of the taskmaster, they have dared defend their rights. Backwards, backwards have they been driven, until they now present the sublime spectacle of a people battling for their very existence, as it were, with the heroic energy of despair.

For thus battling for his rights, the Indian has been called a "bloodthirsty savage," and interested parties, frontier squatters, and speculating contractors are doing their utmost to make good this impression.

An Indian war of growing magnitude is devastating the border, and shocking outrages have been committed, but a careful investigation will show that the whites have so far taken the lead in "bloodthirsty atrocities" of every kind. In what single instance has the Government carried out in good faith and to the letter the promises made through its accredited agents? Has not even the Flag of that Government been stained with the blood of defenceless Indians, men, women, and children, who

had voluntarily placed themselves under its protecting folds, only to be cruelly murdered by the monster Chivington?

Have the tortures inflicted by the Indians upon their unfortunate captives ever equalled the refined cruelties and horrors practised upon the thousands of wretched prisoners in Andersonville and Salisbury by the "chivalry" into whose hands they had fallen? It is notorious that in Texas, and later on our Western frontiers, white men, viler than any redskin, have assumed his dress and paint; as also in Utah, where the Indian disguise has been frequently adopted by the Mormon "Danites," or destroying Angels, to aid in carrying out foul designs of plunder and murder.

In all their dealings with the Government the Indians have been recognized as an independent people, over whom it had no control, beyond such as they chose to concede by treaty. Around every camp, and with every tribe, there are always men, either in their dotage, or else too lazy and worthless to have any standing whatever among their people. — With such worthies as these, (of whom I have given a fair description in the Dry-Pumpkin,) important treaties are often negotiated. Contemptible themselves, and envious of the leading spirits of their nation, this is the only course by which they

can hope to achieve distinction. How can it be expected that treaties thus concluded will be recognized by the principal chiefs, and regarded as binding by the tribe at large!

And for some (perhaps imaginary) breach of faith, the stipulated annuities are frequently withheld in whole or part; for to defraud the Indians is too often regarded as a strictly legitimate business operation.

From the actual commencement of these difficulties (as far back as 1853) the whites have invariably been the aggressors. Desperadoes in the early emigration across the plains deemed their record incomplete until they had killed an "Injin," heedless of the consequences of their reckless acts.

At the treaty of the Platte in 1855, General Harney on behalf of the Government stipulated that the white men should have the right of way *only* on the old California trail, and the navigation of the Missouri River. The settlements in the new territories, the numerous roads that have been opened up, and the game wantonly destroyed, conclusively show how *this* treaty has been kept.

The Atlantic and Pacific States are rapidly approaching each other. The various Indian nations are yearly becoming more and more crowded together, and in self-preservation, the first law of nature, they will make common cause against those

who are ruthlessly depriving them of all they hold dear. And after forbearance has long ceased to be a virtue, and the oppressed turn on the oppressor, the cry is raised, "Extermination!"

This experiment was tried in Florida, where a handful of Seminoles cost the government millions of dollars and many hundreds of valuable lives. An Indian war is too costly an amusement for the trifling results gained. So far the Indians have had decidedly the advantage from their perfect acquaintance with the country, and knowledge of the numbers and position of the pursuing troops, who, with enormous transportation, march hundreds of miles, and capture perhaps an abandoned camp of old, worn-out lodges, the former occupants of which are complacently hunting the buffalo, or playing hide-and-seek in the neighboring hills.

Such at least was the experience of one army, during a campaign carried on with all the pomp and panoply of glorious war, which culminated in the brilliant charge upon an abandoned Cheyenne camp.

That campaign cost the Government, it is true, a million or so of dollars; but what is a million or even millions of dollars in comparison with the important results gained — the *complete* destruction of those worn-out lodges!

The Indians are well armed and equipped, and almost every warrior of standing is provided with a spy-glass, thus adding the assistance of the white man's art to his own matchless vision. Their tough and active ponies give them an advantage, too, over the heavily equipped and grain-fed chargers of the soldiers. In almost every instance in which troops have been sent against them to demand the return of stolen property, the force sent has been absurdly small. Defeat and disaster are the natural results of all such attempts to enforce demands, and a constantly increasing contempt for the power of the Government is fostered.

An army officer* of many years' experience on the frontiers says: "Our little army, scattered as it has been over the vast area of our possessions, in small garrisons of one or two companies each, has seldom been in a situation to act successfully on the offensive against large numbers of these marauders, and has often been condemned to hold itself almost exclusively upon the defensive.

"The *morale* of the troops must thereby necessarily be seriously impaired, and the confidence of the savages correspondingly augmented. The system of small garrisons has a tendency to disorganize the

* General Randolph B. Marcy.

troops in proportion as they are scattered, and renders them correspondingly inefficient. The same results have been observed by the French army in Algeria, where, in 1845, their troops were, like ours, disseminated over a vast space, and broken up into small detachments, stationed in numerous intrenched posts. Upon the sudden appearance of Abd-el-Kader in the plain of Mitidja, they were defeated with serious losses, and were from day to day obliged to abandon these useless stations, with all the supplies they contained. A French writer, in discussing this subject, says:

"'We have now abandoned the fatal idea of defending Algeria by small intrenched posts. In studying the character of the war, the nature of the men who are to oppose us, and of the country in which we are to operate, we must be convinced of the danger in admitting any other system of fortification than that which is to receive our grand dêpots, our magazines, and to serve as places to recruit and rest our troops when exhausted by long expeditionary movements."

"'These fortifications should be established in the midst of the centres of action, so as to command the principal routes, and serve as pivots to expeditionary columns.

"'We owe our success to a system of war which

has its proofs in twice changing our relations with the Arabs. This system consists altogether in the great mobility we have given to our troops. Instead of disseminating our soldiers with the vain hope of protecting our frontiers with a line of small posts, we have concentrated them, to have them at all times ready for emergencies, and since then the fortune of the Arabs has waned, and we have marched from victory to victory.

"'This system, which has thus far succeeded, ought to succeed always, and to conduct us, God willing, to the peaceful possession of the country.'"

In thus briefly treating of the Indian Question, I do not wish it understood that, while desirous of seeing justice done them, I regard the Indians as possessed of those high and noble attributes with which romance has invested them.

The Indians are only *Indians;* men of violent impulse for good and evil, who lead the life of their warrior ancestors in untrammelled freedom. Their wild nature and habits cannot be eradicated, but they may be improved. In the natural course of events, the tribes must retire before the advancing tide of emigration, but it is a serious question how we shall amend the present disgraceful condition of affairs on the border.

A war of extermination is a far more gigantic affair than we can manage, to say nothing of the stigma such an undertaking would cast upon the Government in the eyes of the civilized world. Although such a war would be doubtless exceedingly profitable to a few interested parties, the nation at large, groaning under the burden of a heavy taxation, would hardly care to have that burden indefinitely increased, as it must be, should such a course be adopted, when the evil can be reached by less costly measures.

Peace can be secured *only by a strict and faithful adherence* to the treaties which should be made. Whatever rights the Indians yield, should not be transgressed; whatever rights Government guarantees them, should be faithfully secured. All treaty violations must be *promptly and severely punished. Not* by making new treaties, with perhaps only a partial representation from the offending tribe or tribes, and distributing as a *peace-offering*, arms and munitions of war, but by such a demonstration as would speedily convince them that the Government was a power not to be trifled with. And on the other hand, the military would be quite as necessary to keep the whites from trespassing against the Indians, as the Indians against the whites.

I see no reason why the condition of the Indians

should not be greatly ameliorated. Not by making treaties and extravagant promises, which would either be imperfectly kept, or wholly ignored;—nor could it be done in a day, or in a year either; the confidence so cruelly abused must be restored, and this would be of itself a work of time. It would be impossible to bring the roving Indians at once to the dull routine of civilized life. But they may be persuaded to take the intermediate step; and in the course of time, being reconciled to a new mode of life, they may become a pastoral people. Furnish them with flocks and herds; they could then travel as of old; their stock would increase on their hands, and they would not be wholly dependent upon game for their subsistence. Then in time they would, *if fairly dealt with*, appreciate the advantages to be derived.

This experiment must be made on a liberal scale, and with an ample supply of stock, to command their respect and attention, and persevered in faithfully,—not for a year or so only, but until the end has been accomplished. The money spent in waging war against them for *one month*, would go very far toward a successful experiment.

Farms (I had almost written farces) have been nominally established among several of the Missouri tribes; but from bad management the Indians

have received little if any benefit from them, and it is therefore unjust to brand the system as a failure. When they become necessary, let farms in *reality* as well as name be established, but *not* for the personal benefit of a few interested officials, to the exceeding detriment of the Indians.

I consider the Gros Ventres, Rees, and Mandans the best fitted to commence with. They have a permanent village, raise corn, and regard the whites as their allies. They are ripe for the experiment. Protection against other nations would be necessary, and should be afforded.

This Indian war, in spite of its many evils, has been productive of one good—it has drawn public attention to the many abuses connected with our present Indian *mis*management.

As the affiliation of the two races is impossible, the extinction of the Indian is a question of time. But how much more worthy would it be of a powerful Government to extend every aid and protection to the remnants of the original owners of the soil, until the Great Spirit calls them to their long home.

THE END.